

Municipal Library,
NAINI TAL.



Class No. 947

Book No. G82 R

RUSSIA IN DIVISION



MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
LONDON • BOMBAY • CALCUTTA • MADRAS
MELBOURNE

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
NEW YORK • BOSTON • CHICAGO
DALLAS • SAN FRANCISCO

THE MACMILLAN CO. OF CANADA, LTD.
TORONTO

RUSSIA IN DIVISION

BY

STEPHEN GRAHAM

AUTHOR OF

"THE WAY OF MARINA AND THE WAY OF MARY," ETC.



MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON

1925

Received On

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

1259

FOREWORD

THE Russian revolution, when it occurred, was the result of the inability of the Tsardom to withstand the strain of the World War. There were scandals at Court and scandals in the Administration. In 1917, in the stress of "winning the War", many thought that Russia could be made more effective if she were persuaded to jump from autocracy to constitutional and representative Government. Many English people, not including myself, though my best friends were among them, were working for a constitutional revolution in Russia, and when it came in March 1917 it was heralded as a great victory for the Allies.

The revolution, however, was not the direct fruit of the constitutional movement, but of "defeatism" above and war-weariness below. The proletarian ferment broke through the Army and overran everything. No one in the constitutional movement proved sufficiently strong to

stem the tide. M. Kerensky, indeed, with his famous Order No. 1, did much to swell its fury. But Kerensky was a defeatist before he was Premier.

The revolution was achieved by workmen's committees (Soviets), dominated or led by Lenin and his foreign group. It is a mistake to say that it was entirely the work of Jews. A very Red Russian proletariat was there to be led. It was not numerous, but it was increasing, as a result of evil conditions in the cities. Perhaps it may not be uninteresting to quote what I wrote in *Changing Russia* in 1913 :

“ Of course if the Tsar and his advisers are not wise enough to save their people from commercialism, they will certainly bring ruin on their own heads. Every peasant brought into a factory or a mine or a railway is one man subtracted from the forces of the Tsar, and one added to the social revolutionary party. Conditions of the employment of labour are so bad that they preach in themselves without books and pamphlets. Not all the skill and courage, brutality and diplomacy of the officials will stem the flood. Russian workmen combine more readily than English, have less care of their skins, less regard of consequences. They are only kept in check by the tremendous odds at present against them. Once they gain a

numerical superiority, they will carry all before them and perhaps drown the throne in blood. There is a lust for blood in Russia that must make all Europe stand aghast when it finds expression.

“ I might say a word of the intellectual movement, and the revolutionary movement just past, but it is quelled, discredited, and forgotten. When next there is an outbreak against the Tsardom, it will wear a different complexion. Intellectualism will have disappeared, and the passions of the mob will guide all as far as there can be guidance. The commercial centres of Russia are already infested with drunken hooligan mobs only waiting for a chance to murder and pillage.”

So it has happened—not as a direct result of commercialism, it is true. But there must have been some truth in my prognostications.

This book carries on my study of Russia after tragic years. As regards some of the happenings in Russia, silence must be more eloquent than words.

STEPHEN GRAHAM.

MOST of Section III. and part of Section IV. appeared in the columns of *The Times* newspaper, as did also the outline maps. I am indebted to *The Times* for permission to republish these.

S. G.

CONTENTS

I

THE RUSSIA THAT WE KNEW	PAGE I
-----------------------------------	-----------

II

EUROPE'S DIVIDING LINE	19
----------------------------------	----

III

THROUGH THE CORDON SANITAIRE	29
I. AT THE MONASTERY OF VALAAMO	31
II. PROGRESSIVE FINLAND	43
III. ON THE GULF OF FINLAND	50
IV. IN REPIN'S STUDIO	59
V. IN THE REPUBLIC OF ESTHONIA	65
VI. IN THE CATHEDRAL AT REVAL	75
VII. THE COMMUNIST RISING	80
VIII. IN RIGA AND DVINSK	92
IX. EMPTY BASES OF OLD STATUES	107
X. IN LITHUANIA	113
XI. THE BALTIC STATES AND RUSSIA	123
XII. IN THE POLISH " KRESI "	129

THROUGH THE CORDON SANITAIRE (*contd.*)—

	PAGE
XIII. IN A WARSAW NIGHT SHELTER	139
XIV. THE DESTRUCTION OF WARSAW CATHEDRAL	143
XV. A WOMAN'S FLIGHT FROM RUSSIA	148
XVI. THROUGH BESSARABIA	153

IV

THE RUSSIA IN FRANCE	177
I. CONVERSATIONS WITH RUSSIAN WRITERS :	
1. KUPRIN	179
2. IVAN BUNIN	185
3. ALEKEY REMIZOF	191
4. MEREZHKOVSKY AND HIPPIUS	198
II. THE SITUATION IN PARIS	205
III. THE POSITION OF THE RUSSIAN CHURCH IN PARIS	214
IV. THE POSITION OF THE BANKS IN PARIS	219

V

THE ALLIANCE OF SOCIALIST SOVIET REPUBLICS	227
I. THE U.S.S.R.	229
II. THE SCHISM	234
III. THE EXTERNAL PROGRAM	241
IV. THE METHOD	245
V. THE BRITISH TRADE UNIONISTS' DELEGATION	260
VI. THE PEASANTRY AND THE REVOLUTION	269
VII. CONCLUSION	281
INDEX	289

I
THE RUSSIA THAT WE KNEW

THE RUSSIA THAT WE KNEW

THE Russia that we knew has gone. Even the name has been abolished. Some call it Sovdepiä, others Sessera ; the Bolsheviks call it the S.S.S.R. To the emigrants, to the poets and singers, there is a Russia, but it is a sort of invisible kingdom, something that was, is, and shall be, but a dream, a hope, an ideal homeland.

Geographically, that Russia, "one and indivisible", for which Denikin fought, has been greatly altered. Five external autonomous republics flourish on one side of the new line, and on the other there are the various Soviet republics. Many names of places have been changed. Petrograd becomes Leningrad, Simbirsk is called Uliansk, and other cities go to-day by different names, and are indeed different in themselves.

The outside world, in thinking concretely of Russia, has to envisage a power entirely different from that of the Tsars. It must think of a smaller

4 THE RUSSIA THAT WE KNEW

Russia, with changed potentialities. It is one which is more agricultural and paradoxically less agricultural ; more a peasant nation, but less a peasant power. The great landowners have gone ; the land belongs to the people. To gain the suffrage of the peasants even the forest rights have been conceded to the moujiks. But it is a Russia that cultivates less ; a Russia where agricultural machinery is less used ; a Russia whose power of marketing and distribution of crops seems to have been fatally impaired. The old Russia helped to feed the industrial Western world ; the new one is faced with perpetual partial famine. When grain is wrested from the richer districts and exported from Russia in the summer, it is found necessary to re-import grain in the winter to feed the poorer districts.

The old Russia, exploited by foreign companies, was a tremendous exporter of raw materials. England, France, and Belgium worked in oil, copper, platinum, gold, asbestos, coal and iron, zinc, and mercury. Corporations, like the Kish-tim Corporation, held enormous concessions. The old Russia was one of growing industrialism, and, helped by the brains of Manchester, the cotton mills of Moscow and Lodz put shirts on the backs of Russia and one-half of Asia. To-day the

mines are largely unworked. Unpractical Russians try and exploit natural wealth without success. The factories languish. Confiscated concessions are reapplied to new foreign companies, but under the new conditions no enterprise seems to have yielded profit to concessionaires.

In a military way the country is less changed : it still possesses a large but inefficient army. Its navy, however, has disappeared. The nation is capable of raiding, but not capable of war. In foreign policy it is meddling as of old, but is not yet possessed of the statesmen and diplomats requisite for successful interferences.

However, it was not because of agriculture, business, or policy that the old Russia was famous, but because of her characteristic national life, her literature, art, and music, and her work in scientific research. One should add also her Church, her religious fervour, that which in contradistinction to all the material aspect of Russia was called Holy Russia.

In 1914 a civilisation, great in itself but growing and promising so much more than it showed, stood astride Europe and Asia, based on the vast rich plains which are the living kernel and grain-centre of the Old World. The War spent its shattering force, and it might be said that that

6 THE RUSSIA THAT WE KNEW

civilisation was no more. It had become the invisible Russia and, like the Highland clan, had "a name that was nameless by day".

The Jews interpreted certain prophecies in the Talmud as referring to the fate of Russia. And while one cannot but believe that God loves the Gentiles to-day at least as much as He loves the children of Israel, one cannot be surprised that fervent Jews see in the destruction of Russia a Biblical visitation of the vengeance of God upon those who have persecuted His people. With all respect, it is an incredibly exaggerated vengeance. Pharaoh and the Egyptians got off very lightly by comparison.

The Russians of the upper classes have had an almost Jewish destiny, being to-day scattered over the face of the world, doing day-labour all the way from Bulgarian coal-fields to the ranches of the Argentine.

The historians of fifty years hence will see the picture in a clearer light than we do to-day. With all our love of news we do not like to face truth. We especially dislike facing it when it is tragical. We put our fingers before our eyes, or simply we avert our gaze ; or we put our imagination to a wrong use, depicting with the mind's eye a fantastic picture, when all that is necessary is to open

the eyes to the picture which is before it. Some stern realists do see that picture and believe their eyes. But dare one study it in detail ?

Who shone in the Russia of 1914, and where are they now ? What more dreadfully impressive than the roll-call of the Revolution ! A song of Glinka's tells of a trumpeter who, at the dark midnight hours, bid arise Napoleon's dead from Russia's soil after the retreat from Moscow. To similar music another song could be sung. Where are the Tsar, the Empress, the charming children ; where is the consenting liberal Grand Duke Michael, who should have been Tsar after the double renunciation of Nicholas the Second for himself and for his son ? Where is the saintly sister of the Empress who at the Convent of Martha and Mary devoted herself to the poor of Moscow ? The Imperial family is undoubtedly destroyed, though not a bone nor a finger has been preserved. The Dowager Empress Marie for long believed that Nicholas still lived, the natural faith of a mother that her child has been preserved—that is all. The Tsar's brother Michael vanished and is accepted as dead ; his widow, the Countess Brassof, has long mourned him in London. The Grand Duchess Elizabeth was murdered, and there was a legend of a monk

8 THE RUSSIA THAT WE KNEW

conducting her body in its coffin from village to village across Siberia to Peking whence it was transported to Jerusalem, where it now lies.

I remember a book that appeared during the War ; it was called *Russia's Gift to the World*. Its direct aim was to familiarise English people with the immense extent and value of Russian culture. Prof. Mackail, who wrote it, mobilised in a few pages the bright names of Russia. He presented a great, rich, and promising nation. That was the glorious pre-revolutionary Russia, which we have exchanged for a ragged, beggared Russia dominated by a group of human gorillas. The Russia of Dostoieffsky, Chaikovsky, Repin, for the Russia of Zinovief, Trotsky, and Lenin. Are they facetious or merely ignorant, stone-blind ignorant, those politicians of ours who upon occasion stand up in Parliament and aver that the Russia of to-day is the same as the Russia of yesterday, only the names are changed ? It is a mockery and cruelty, almost a blasphemy.

The new Russia is no more like the old than Yiddish is like Russian ; the new culture is a jargon culture superimposed on the old culture. The old Russia brought manifold great gifts to the common altar ; the new one only brings death and change.

If a musician like Glazunof remained with the Bolsheviks, or professors like Konovalof and Pavlof, or a writer like Sologub, it was largely because they could not escape. All Russia is a prison, and they have come to no good in it.

I find it commonly asserted that we have no quarrel with Bolshevik culture. But there is no such thing, unless the writings of Trotsky, the poems of Lunacharsky, and the speeches of Zinovief are to be considered such. Where are the plays of Soviet Russia, the music of it, the novels of it, the philosophy of it, the pictures? What culture has come forth? Zero; that is all.

One of the first of the Bolshevik acts when the civil war closed was to send the philosophical professors out of the country: an expression of plain contempt for philosophy. It must be said the professors were loth to go; they had been rooted in the national life, and they felt that their true place was among their own people whatever happened to them. But Bolshevik Russia could do without the genius of Losky, the deeply religious and patriotic fervour of Bulgakof or of Berdaieff, or S. L. Frank. They must all live at Prague. Their names shine forth in letters from "Golden Prague", that other Moscow of the Czechs. With the philosophers disappeared also

many historians and jurists. For both the history and the law of Russia had become archaic.

Most of the famous living writers of old Russia are in exile : they fled, and they will not return till the Marxian horde is dispersed. Andreief died abroad in wild despair ; Kuprin came out with the army of General Judenitch, and is now in Paris ; Amphiteatrof, who tried to show H. G. Wells in Moscow the utter misery of writing men in Russia, escaped from its misery in 1923. Merezhkovsky, perhaps the greatest of Russian living writers, stayed as long as he could in Petrograd and came out the sworn immutable enemy of the Bolsheviks. I suppose he is one of the greatest interpreters of the Russian national spirit that we have. He was a Liberal. His counterpart on the reactionary side, the no less talented Rozanof, died of starvation at Serge-Troitsky Monastery. The folk-lorist Remizof was obliged, after some years in the Theatrical Department, to flee to Berlin, and thence he migrated to Paris. The tale-writer, Bunin, great master of the Russian language, fled also to Paris, as did Balmont, the most lyrical product of his age in Russia. Artsibashef, who once startled the world with " Sanin ", has fled to Warsaw. Severianin, the innovator in poetry, is in Esthonia.

Gumilof, brilliant young poet, was shot in Moscow for counter-revolutionary activity. Struve, the famous editor of the *Russkaya Misl*, is in Prague. Maxim Gorky, proletarian as he is, performed his distasteful task as Dictator of Art under the Soviets and has now gone to Capri, whence it seems improbable that he will return. Two poets, it is true, served under the Bolsheviks : Brusof as Censor, Blok, their late laureate. Both are prematurely dead. They could not live and prosper after their betrayal and mistake. Poor Blok was bitterly repentant and miserable, carried his rations to others who were starving, and his death was actually due to self-immolation. Sologub and his wife decided upon flight, obtained their passports, and then on the eve before departure the woman in hysteria drowned herself. Mme. Sologub used to stand on street corners and cry out against the horror and shame of the new rule. She had been half-crazed with misery. Her husband, old man as he is, felt he hardly could go on, after her death, and he has remained in Russia. Kropotkin died in penury and neglect at Dmitrof near Moscow ; there is, on the other side of the scale, the terrorist Savenkof, excellent writer as he was, he betrayed the exiles last year, and then curiously

enough disappeared from public view. I have no doubt he will regret his return.

Russia is famous abroad for her music and dancing, but having constrained the greatest singer in the world to remain with them, Shaliapine, he has at last escaped and does not intend to return. The tenor, Sobinof, almost as famous as Shaliapine, is with the Bolsheviks, but is seldom heard of now. Of the great musicians of our day, Rachmaninof and Stravinsky are exiles. Scriabin died happily in 1914 before the catastrophe.

Even pro-Bolsheviks in the West laud the Imperial ballet and cheer Pavlova, but what has she to do with Soviet Russia ; cheer Karsavina, Nikolaeva, Tchernicheva, Lopokova, all exiles from their country. Diaghilef does not start from Moscow or Petrograd, but wanders around and around the world with beauty. One country is shut to him : his own.

The Theatre of Art of Moscow, it is true, carries on as it may, in Soviet Russia, encouraged, but unable to create anything new. How can a theatre live without plays, and with a proletarian audience that eats sunflower seeds in the stalls ? Kachalof, their greatest tragic actor, is touring the border states ; Stanislavsky languishes in Moscow.

The painter Repin, eighty years old, lives in Finland, quite cut off from Russia ; Roerich, at the time of writing, is in Tibet, but he has a home for all his recent pictures in America and is greatly prized there ; Nesterof languishes in Moscow, not working, now, in fact, in prison. Pereplotchikof died in the famine. Benois is in Paris. Somof, with some hundreds of paintings done by starving artists in Soviet Russia, has lately been touring the Western world to find buyers.

Literature, art, music, dancing — Russia is known by these. Not her greatest product, but easiest to understand. What shall one say of the saints done to death, the meek clergy, patient and impatient monks, the bishops, the archbishops, the long list beginning with Archbishop Benjamin of Petrograd, Antony of Kief, Anastasy of Kharkof ? The number of the martyrs of the Christian Church has been doubled in Russia.

In one respect, neither the old Russia nor the new one shines. Their politicians are equally vain and bad. Not all who escaped from Russia deserved to escape being shot. Let silence cover them. They loved themselves and their parties more than they loved Russia.

But we pause : of those who fought for the common cause in the War, how many have been

killed, how many others exiled, ruined, destroyed by poverty in the strange West. Generals Russky and Radko Dmitrief were shot at Piatigorsk. The Imperial Grand Duke and Generalissimo lives in simplicity at Château Choigny, near Paris. Few will yield a tear for Kolchak butchered in Siberia, but he fought for the Allies before he led the counter-revolution. Though Judenitch is market-gardening in the south of France, and Wrangel sits in a Serbian monastery, and Denikin is comfortably housed in Hungary, their heroic followers have had more diverse destinies. Kolchak's paladins have plunged into China. Many of Denikin's Cossacks found their way to the Argentine and Peru ; some of them went to the Congo. Some of Wrangel's forlorn followers joined the armies of Kemal Pasha, others offered themselves as virtual slaves in Peru. Five thousand pensionless disabled soldiers languish still in the Balkans, cared for mostly by the devoted General Baratof. They use what is left of their limbs in Bulgarian mines or in the lumber camps of the Banat. Their names are little known, but their lives are not less heroic for their lost cause.

The same hand that has smitten all these smote also science, scholarship, research. Russia was leading the world in chemistry, but her chemists

are dispersed. Science, it is true, is to a certain extent independent of revolutions, and a Korenchevsky can go straight to the Lister Institute in London, a Metallnikof to the Pasteur Institute in Paris, without loss to general European culture, only a loss to Russia. To pass to the practical domestic side of science, Russia's medicinal faculty is dismissed. Surgeons, doctors, specialists in numbers have died of famine or disease, or having fled, remain largely without practice in foreign lands. Thus Dr. Zaidler, one of the most famous surgeons in Europe, sits idly in Finland. Russia had a fine system of higher education and pedagogy, but half her professors and teachers have gone.

Let the trumpeter call them at midnight ; bid them come and march past, the ghosts of the Russia we love, the banished and the dead.

Professor Kartashof in Paris told me recently that the external army of Russia could be mobilised in three days. At a given signal, officers and men scattered all over Europe would quit mine and workshop and rally to the standard of the Russia which was once and yet again will be. The Grand Duke would lead them ; they would return to place the Double-Eagle on the Kremlin once more. I smiled sadly at the naïve enthusiasm of the president of the Russian national

committee. He would need Roland's horn to summon the lost Russia.

Could one raise the jaded aristocrats and captains now become proletariat to fight the proletariat now become aristocrats and captains? It is like raising the dead. I do not believe any army will march against Sessera. If Sessera falls, she will fall through inward collapse rather than external pressure. But even so, should the great day come, make no mistake, Russia would not become what she was. Too much has fallen away for the old edifice to be restored. I do believe that the present domination of Russia will disappear. A violent death is probably waiting for the more blood-guilty of the leaders. The mausoleum of Lenin must inevitably be destroyed. It is conceived as an insult to Christ, the counter-shrine to the Sepulchre, and in our belief and faith it cannot stand. Lenin may be canonised in Atheism by the Living Church, but the Tsar may be canonised after him; his relics invented or discovered. Russia may swing from the extreme left to the extreme right. But new abysses of unhappiness intervene, and the resultant Russia could not be the one that was.

In Russia there is plenty of time for unhappiness, revolution, and counter-revolution. Her

peasantry is indestructible ; her passivity incalculable. She has time also for the restoration of happiness and peace. We may not live to see it. We want to see it ; we are impatient. With us time flies. With them it crawls slowly like a sunbeam across a prison floor. Our roads have milestones ; theirs wind back and forth over the illimitable steppe. We have a long tradition of settlement ; they have the past of tribes who wandered with their tents. For these reasons we cannot find guidance in the book of history as to how the destiny of Russia will shape itself. Perhaps we should refrain from prophesying a dawn. Enough if from time to time one can answer fairly the question—" Watchman, what of the night ? "

II

EUROPE'S DIVIDING LINE

EUROPE'S DIVIDING LINE

THE original title of this book was to have been "The Dividing Line of Europe", but it soon became clear that such a title was too problematical. One is quickly asked : what is that line ; what do you mean ?

I made a journey last autumn from the Monastery of Valaamo on Lake Ladoga to Akkerman, the town which is opposite Odessa, on the Black Sea, keeping generally to the new frontier of Russia, and so passing through the cordon of new states—Finland, Esthonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland, and also through Bessarabia, that Dneister region annexed after the war by Rumania. These states, sometimes called the Wall of Republics, sometimes Europe's Cordon Sanitaire, form the geographical dividing line. On that frontier " Sessera " ends and Europe begins.

But there is also a fighting line of class war which is not in any one country but is to-day in

every country. When the protagonists of the Third International speak of their external line they mean something going on in London, Paris, Berlin, New York, Afghanistan, China, and so forth. There is this line of class war. When the war with Germany ceased the mobilisation for the other war began. It is the so-called "war to the knife of the proletariat".

The frontiers of Bolshevism are in the human heart. So be it. A fight is always going on for the possession of man's soul. Faust is with the Devil; Job is with God—it has been going on through the ages. It is not exactly of that divine warfare that I wished to write when I set out to study Europe's Dividing Line.

It is eight years since I was in Moscow. I should have returned, but it has proved difficult to obtain a passport. In 1917 I had an adverse opinion of the prospects of the constitutional revolution. On the recommendation of the British Ambassador at Petrograd I was refused a passport. My sphere of greater usefulness being therefore removed, I went into the Army, where I served my term as a private soldier. Several efforts were made to get me to Russia; I took no further steps myself, but some influential friends used their efforts to make a better use of my pen

than of my bayonet. But the Government of the time being cautiously sympathetic to the Russian revolution was not loth to have silence imposed upon a possible critic. But as the fatal year 1917 progressed, its events showed the doubters to have been right, and these events converted the British Government to an anti-revolutionary point of view.

Indeed, without obtaining Parliamentary sanction, the Coalition Government of the time proceeded to wage war on revolutionary Russia. There were two wars going on in 1918, and when the Armistice with Germany was achieved the other still went on—the war with the Bolsheviks. Our troops had been in Russia primarily to prevent the German prisoners liberated after the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk rejoining the armies of the Central Powers. Secondly, they were there to protect the vast amount of British wealth in Russia from Bolshevik expropriation. Thirdly, we were there to assist the insurgent Russian constitutionalists to recover the reins of government from Lenin.

Even after the German peril ceased there were ample reasons for a war upon the Bolsheviks. But it looked as if we were in the field merely to retrieve the fallen fortunes of Milyukof and

Kerensky. Had the Prime Minister sought the nation's approval for this second war, he would either have obtained a mandate to go in and win or to clear out of Russia altogether. But in those days there had grown a curious negligence of the value of public opinion. The Government was lacking in moral authority. It could not safely prosecute a new war in Russia without taking the nation into its confidence. I, for my part, felt strongly as a demobilised soldier that the Government had no right to send any portion of the Army to Russia without popular sanction, and that no good could come of our intervention.

I notice that many Russian *émigrés* to-day reproach Great Britain for her half-heartedness. They do not grasp the fact that the British Government never had any mandate to go into the adventure. As soon as the spectacle of our troops skirmishing in Russia became visible, the light of public opinion began to play upon them. Both Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Winston Churchill tried explanations and justifications, but they knew the various expeditions had to be recalled.

One idea of the time was that the newly constituted League of Nations would take on the responsibility for a war on Russia. For a while

Mr. Churchill spoke as if all questions on the matter should be addressed to the League.

Our supposed help was in any case a drawback to the Russian generals, who thought that the Allies were in earnest in fighting for them. Denikin would either have won or have died fighting if there had been no British fleet to take off his army from Novorossisk. Wrangel would have fought better. Judenitch's army would have fought better. I believe the counter-revolutionaries might have won had the British kept out of Russia. But we were there with our distasteful cut-and-dried new Russia plan and our latter-day war ethics, but without the great driving power of a fighting and believing England.

I found it impossible to get a *visa* for Russia after the Armistice, but I kept up a running fire of criticism in the Press upon our policy in Russia. None rejoiced more than I at the complete liquidation of our military enterprises there. But, unfortunately, we had gone too far. We exhausted the counter-revolutionary movement and helped to bring down north, south, east, and west, a ghastly vengeance upon civilian sympathisers. Denikin got almost to within sight of Moscow, and I think it one of the most disgraceful matters in the story of Russia's civil war that he

abandoned all the vast peaceful civilian populations of the south of Russia to the torture chambers of the Cheka and the shooting wall, the vengeance of the Reds.

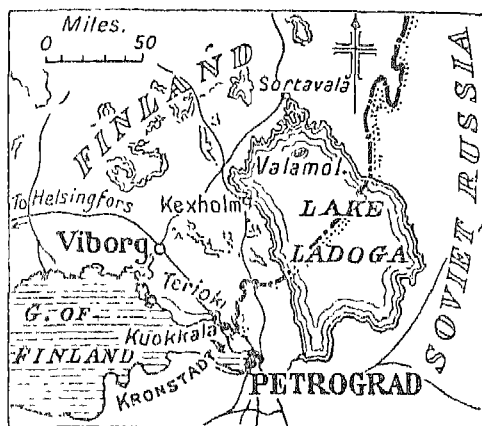
However, there has been increasingly more chance of Russia's righting herself since there was peace. It has never seemed to me that there was harm in trading with the Bolsheviks, though recognition by Mr. MacDonald's Government was weak and unpractical. How can we recognise a Government with such blood-guiltiness as that of the Soviet; how can we receive at our Court the representatives of those who killed the kindred of the King?

I should have liked to visit Moscow under the new conditions, though I could not pretend to foresee a favourable verdict upon Bolshevik institutions. I believe I am known as an impartial writer, careful not to write paid-for propaganda. My opinion may not be worth much, but it is not for sale. The writing I do is of no use to the Bolsheviks, who want simply favourable propaganda on any terms. The last application for a *visa* for me to visit Moscow was refused with the words "premature, and would serve no useful purpose". Permission to visit Bolshevik Russia implies a readiness on the part of the visitor to

serve the cause of the Russian Government. Some visitors are able to avoid the pact whereby they obtain their *visa* and they return to give an unbiassed story of life under the new conditions. But these are in a minority.

However, it has seemed to me that the Russian revolution is nearing second revolution. Peace is more disintegrating than war. So I have returned to the study of the Russian situation and, being debarred from actually entering the territory of the Soviets, I have done the next best thing—made a tour of the frontier. I found that frontier to be a remarkable vantage-ground for surveying Russia and Europe. There, in the cordon of states designed to be obstructions between barbarism and European civilisation one stands astride Europe's dividing line. I stood in 1914 on the Ural Mountains where in the old days Asia and Europe were deemed to be geographically parted. Ten years later it seemed as if the frontier posts of Asia had been advanced thousands of miles west.

III
THROUGH THE CORDON
SANITAIRE



I

AT THE MONASTERY OF VALAAMO

I

AFTER eight years' enforced absence from Russia I find myself, not without some trepidation, in an old Russian monastery, that of the island of Valaamo on Lake Ladoga. It is shut off from Russia now. Tens of thousands of pilgrims used to visit it ; none come any more. The old monks die ; no young ones come to take their place. Twelve hundred have become four hundred. "Many died in the famine time ; others were sent away by the Finns", one Father explained. Only two candles burning on Sunday at the altar of the cathedral church—but crowds of visitors,

32 THROUGH THE CORDON SANITAIRE

Finnish picnickers. There is a curious note of reproach in the voices of some of the monks, when talking about God, as if they felt that God had let them down. They amble in the woods with their grizzled old locks hanging about their shoulders, the gracious stoop of benign old age lending sweetness and dignity to their movements. They stand and stare with sunken eyes over the silver and grey levels of Lake Ladoga—to the side whence no boats ever come any more.

For the lake has ceased to be free ; enemies live on opposite shores of it, and little Finnish flotillas of motor-boats with machine-guns police the waters. No Russians may come from the forests of the eastern shore or from “ Lenin-grad ” and Schlusselfburg and the thickly populated regions in the south. Valaamo belongs to the Republic of Finland.

Formerly, how the pilgrims swarmed ; but now not a pilgrim ! I am told that even if Russians were allowed to cross the lake few would now come to pray. For pilgrimaging has been stopped in Russia. You may tramp to seek work ; you may not tramp to seek God. The Russian National Church only continues on sufferance of the Soviet Government, which, being militantly atheistic, works necessarily for the destruction of religious habits.

AT THE MONASTERY OF VALAAMO 33

The great shrines of old Russia are now under governmental boycott. There are no peasant pilgrims at Jerusalem and Mount Athos. Their chorus of praise is missing at Serge-Troitsky. Solovetsky Monastery on the White Sea is used as a convict settlement for Russian business men. Novy Afon, after being looted, has become merely a communal farm. The great days of Kief are gone. St. Seraphim at Arzamas lacks sound of praise and intercession. It is not surprising, therefore, that the religious life of Russia does not reach Valaamo on Lake Ladoga, and that the poor old Fathers are left alone to save their own souls because there are no others to save.

The Finnish picnickers prattled to them in broken Russian, trying, I thought, to ingratiate themselves a little, but without much success. The old fellows were very humble and sweet in their answers, but they knew the Finns, owing to their own Lutheran religion, were out of sympathy with the monastery and its former life.

In the old days, before war and revolution, there used to be many Finnish visitors to Valaamo. But they did not look with sympathy upon the monastery with its asceticisms, its rituals, its ikons, its hermits. It seemed to them then, as it does now, entirely foreign to the spirit of their

34 'THROUGH THE CORDON SANITAIRE

Northern home. Nor did they feel that it corresponded to their ideas of chastity, sobriety, and industry. Neither the music nor the colour moved them. For the Finns, despite the possession of Sibelius, are not musical, and they are neither emotional nor imaginative. Whatever may be their racial origins, the Finns are now a rugged northern stock, pale-haired and pale-eyed. Imitating the Germans, the men shave their heads, and it is even amusing to see the hirsute Russian heads and faces confronted by these dapper well-barbered craniums of the Finns.

But the difference between Finn and Russian is much more than that of *chevelure*. The Finns are a people who conquer the cold ; the Russians a people merely passive to it, and as conquest of suffering makes for individual development, so acceptance of it makes more for social common feeling. The Finns must make a stern individual approach to God ; they could not easily be fused or melted by Catholic emotionalism. It will readily be understood that when they gained their independence as a nation, they should regard any religious seats of the Russians as dangerous and unwanted.

In thinking of the Finns one ought to bear in mind that they never were a nation until now.

It was not true to say that the Russians deprived them of nationhood. Sweden ceded Finland to Russia in 1809. So before it was under Russia it was under Sweden. Sweden and Russia are ancient enemies, and this land of Finland was continually overrun by the armies of the Swedes and the Russians. The soldiers wrought rapine in Finland. There is a deep-seated hate of Russians there—and hate will out, though it has centuries to wait.

Russia made Finland into a buffer State and thereby effectually stopped the strife between herself and Sweden. At first she pursued the policy of conciliating the Finns and did much to encourage them towards nationhood. This, however, was changed by the statesmen serving under Nicholas the Second, who pursued an ill-starred policy of Russification, driving the Finns to political frenzy and bringing out in their character the long-buried hate of the Russian. Nicholas the Second abrogated the Finnish Constitution in 1899 and restored it in 1905. During these six years the Finns became greatly disaffected, and little was done after 1905 to win them back. The Finnish national spirit which had been encouraged by the Alexanders proved to be obnoxious to Nicholas the Second and the parties of the Right.

36 THROUGH THE CORDON SANITAIRE

“*Finis Finlandiae!*” cried Purishkeyevitch exultantly in the Duma on one occasion. The Russian imperialists were quite out of patience with Finland, and wished to see it consolidated as a Russian-speaking part of the Empire, with Russian coinage, Russian military service, etc., on a level with the rest of Russia.

Therefore when 1914, the year of destiny, came, Russia could not count upon Finland in the strife. The Finns, like their neighbours and former masters the Swedes, preferred the Germans. Russia was obliged to take active steps to prevent sedition, “repressive measures”, they were called by those who sympathised with the Finns. Nevertheless the Russians were not able to prevent thousands of Finns from going to Germany and offering themselves as volunteers to fight against their enemies.

When in 1917 the revolution took place none rejoiced more sincerely than the Finnish people. Like the Germans, they understood it as the downfall of Russia. They determined at once to achieve complete independence. First, the Diet claimed in July 1917 to be solely responsible for the laws of Finland. In December it proclaimed Finland's autonomy. In January 1918 it proclaimed Finland's neutrality in the war.

AT THE MONASTERY OF VALAAMO 37

Meanwhile the Bolsheviks had obtained control of the revolutionary movement in Russia, and the Soviet Republic had been formed. The Bolsheviks recognised the Finnish Republic, but not in a friendly spirit, remaining as hostile to the Finnish Government as the Tsar's ministers had been to the Finnish Diet and the Finnish Constitution. The Finnish Socialists took arms against their own new Government and fought it for four months, aided by Russian revolutionary troops and supplies. Germany, however, came to the assistance of its friends and the insurrection was quelled.

In return for German aid the Finns decided upon a considerable sacrifice of their newly won nationhood by electing Prince Frederick Charles of Hesse to be their king. Had Germany won the war it is probable that we should have had to-day a Finnish kingdom united dynastically to the Imperial German throne.

But Germany fell. Prince Frederick never came, and Finland remained a republic. Bourgeois elements consolidated their control from above, revolutionary Socialism seethed below, and Bolshevik Russia was at the gates. But Fortune has favoured Finland. Her frontiers have been recognised. She has obtained an ice-

38 THROUGH THE CORDON SANITAIRE

free Arctic port at Petschenga, she has been admitted to membership of the League of Nations. After seven stormy post-war years Finland's position seems to be stronger. Finland has as fair a chance as any of the new republics to retain permanently the independence which as a result of the war has been obtained.

II

But all the great forested frontier of Russia seems dead—as if beyond the pines the Russian nation had lain down to die like an old wounded bear in his lair. There is but one permanent way of transit between the two countries, *via* Viborg and Rajajoki, and pitiful is the tiny stream of people and goods going along it—many millions of people in Russia, and empty carriages coming from Russia every day.

The Russian national flag is down, and the red flag which has taken its place does not win the respect of power. The great Russian empire is dissolved, and the strength which was Russia has been dissipated. The idea of Russia being master over them or in control of their destinies is bitterly humiliating to the Finns, and they are resolved to erase every trace of Russianism from their country. What Russians there are in Fin-

AT THE MONASTERY OF VALAAMO 39

land are cooped up in a narrow zone beside the frontier ; the region is under military control, and they are not allowed to leave it without very strong reasons. There are but few Russians in Helsingfors and Viborg now. There is one tiny Russian newspaper called the *Russkia Vesti*, edited from the capital. The Russian language is no longer learned by the children. Russian names and notices have, of course, been obliterated. Swedish, however, enjoys equal privileges with Finnish. The nation is officially bi-lingual, but the nationalistic movement which totally excludes Russian is now being turned somewhat upon Swedish also. Those who speak Swedish but not Finnish are not smiled upon.

Valaamo Monastery exhibits some aspects of Finnification. It is governed by a committee of Finns. The new style calendar has been introduced. The monks are required to become Finnish subjects ; their lands are national property. Hospitality has been abolished. The clergy are recommended to cut their hair. Alterations in the liturgy are enforced. Recalcitrant monks are banished. The monastery shop and the quick-lunch restaurant seem to have become more important than the churches and shrines. Certainly the ageing brotherhood are all agog with petty

grievances which they poured out to me in a flood when they realised I was not a Finn. Being cut off from their motherland of Russia is certainly a terrible ordeal for the holy men, and few of them are able to reconcile their souls to the change.

I found the monks, or at least some of them, ardent partisans of the Grand Duke Nicholas. He is the hero of the old monks, perhaps partly because of his good works there in old days. The imperial family was much associated with the monastery, and the monks remain pathetically attached to those for whom they have not ceased to pray. There are in the museum some sad memorials of the Tsar and Tsarina in Siberia, chiefly photographs and letters—the most remarkable, a photograph of the Empress, the Grand Duchess Olga, and the Grand Duchess Tatiana in prison in Tobolsk : three hopeless, averted faces, the mother's indescribably grim.

The monks, however, refuse to believe them dead, still think they will return to the light. They read no papers ; they subsist on rumours and legends. The strongest of these, at the time, is that the Grand Duke Nicholas has predicted a change in Russia beginning on the day of the festival of Our Lady of Kazan. The monks rather moodily awaited it.

AT THE MONASTERY OF VALAAMO 41

The unhappy schism in the monarchists has evidently reached this northern monastery, and several monks evinced a dislike of the Grand Duke Cyril.

“ I’m afraid there’s not much chance either for Cyril Alexandrovitch or for Nicholai Nicholaievitch,” said I. “ The White armies are dispersed. The Bolsheviks have crushed all opposition.”

“ When will it end ? ” they asked sorrowfully. That has proved to be a common question. O Lord, how long !

They told me of the recent death of one of their long-silent hermits, silent all through the war and through the revolution ; told me of their miserable poverty and how in their direst distress money actually came through to them from the ruined Church in Russia.

“ But one must not complain ; one *can* live now. We sell keepsakes to the trippers. Our timber is being cut down and sold. We are able to buy bread. The Abbot we have now is very mean but he does a good trade. Life is different—without congregations, without worshippers. We like it better in the winter, when we are left entirely to ourselves, when the lake is frozen. It is a long and peaceful season.”

The buglers from a patrol steamer made the

42 THROUGH THE CORDON SANITAIRE

white walls of the great cathedral echo. We heard the popping of lemonade bottles and the merry laughter of sightseers. The blue cross flag of Finland waved in the evening sunlight. The old men seemed like the tail-end of a vanishing procession, a procession which having been in the open now entered the forests and the darkness and oblivion.

“We expect a miracle,” said a greybeard to me, waving his long locks. “Only by miracle can our Russia be saved.”

II

PROGRESSIVE FINLAND

THE women of Finland took their political franchise in 1906. They were the first women to win the vote, and their victory gained for the Finns a reputation as a progressive people. Women stand on a level with men in the country. There are exceedingly few idle women, few of the pampered and petted, few of the merely ornamental. Indeed the male visitor does not easily lose his heart to the women of Finland ; their minds are on their work, and their faces reflect it.

Plainness of dress, cleanness of house, rigidity of morals, hardness of face, brusqueness of conversation, mark the Finnish woman. But I have no doubt that to her Finland owes the greater part of her advance. Women have won for themselves positions ordinarily filled by men, in the professions, in administrations, in the banks. The foreign visitor cannot but be struck with the

44 THROUGH THE CORDON SANITAIRE

women cashiers in the large banks of Helsingfors and Viborg—hard-faced women truly, but accurate, sure, not to be brow-beaten or diverted from their business, women who have discarded the powder-puff and the reticule mirror.

Finland is a country without slums and without public-houses. The gambling evil is not noticeable. Its Government is strongly opposed to Socialism, but there is a remarkable development of the co-operative movement. Education is backward in the forested regions, owing to the scattered nature of the population, but it is advanced in the towns. Co-education, the education of boys and girls together, is as common as in America. Women have had the opportunity of University education for over fifty years.

No doubt one of the greatest victories over the social evils of our civilisation is the prohibition of liquors. Here again the women are largely responsible. Left to themselves, the men of Finland would probably repeal this law or re-introduce beer. The Swedish side of the population is remarkably partial to beer when it can get it. The Northern republic presents a remarkable phenomenon. The national drink of America is soda, of Britain it is beer, of Mexico it is pulche, but of Finland it is milk.

It is surprising to see the officers of the new Finnish army sitting at café tables with glasses of milk in front of them. The officers of other nations are inclined to mock. Can one fight on milk? Well, the answer is, I suppose, we all started on milk. Who, born of woman, can deny?

Finland shares with America the glory or the reproach of Prohibition. Russia tried the experiment, but the Bolsheviks went back on it. Vodka-drinking on the other side of the Finnish border is only limited by low wages.

Some say it is good, others say it is bad, but it cannot be denied that temperance in Finland is at least associated with cleanliness, prosperity, and athleticism. The fine showing made by Finland at the Olympic Games is at least suggestive. A journey through the country reveals a nation on a high level of morality, and a young people which is unusually fit.

In Finland, however, as in America, the persistent do not experience great difficulty in obtaining drink. There is boot-legging there as in the greater Republic. There is illicit drinking, which is shocking enough, and there are of course many prosecutions. Propagandists of liquor, working against the propagandists of temperance, repeatedly

46 THROUGH THE CORDON SANITAIRE

point out that Prohibition in Finland is a failure—in the same way that it is a failure in the United States. They call upon the Finnish Government bravely to face the fact and repeal the Prohibition law. To do this, however, Finland seems nowise in a hurry. In that also she follows the example of America.

I saw a certain amount of illicit drinking, not, it is true, at Helsingfors, but at Viborg. I was told you could order spirits with your bread. That is true. You can call spirits from the vasty deep, but will they come when you do call for them? Not always. I stayed at the Hotel Kamp in Helsingfors. In the large restaurant not a guest was drinking alcoholic liquor, and it was no use asking for it. Again, in the large boulevard café opposite the music of the city bandstand, the whole company was on milk, tea, coffee, and mineral waters.

In Viborg, however, I lodged at a “blind tiger”, and through the midnight hours in the room next to mine I heard the unmistakable clash and guzzle of gorgeous potations. The midnight punch of Viborg was a notable phenomenon. In the gardens in Viborg also I met a boot-legger who proffered Esthonian schnapps from a large tin container. The man came up to

me, pretending to beg. When I showed cash he unveiled his shining cannikin and offered me a swig from the neck of the same. It was neither clean nor comely.

Sailors brought grog into Viborg off the ships, and especially on Saturday and Sunday nights was there tipsiness. Street brawls were not infrequent. I suppose it must always have been so. The Finnish sailor under the influence of drink is notoriously free with his knife.

Curiously enough, on the Russian frontier and the thickly populated region opposite Kronstadt and next to Petrograd I found no smuggling going on, no drinking whatsoever. The Bolsheviks sin in many ways—but not, it seems, in boot-legging. They seem to be content to leave Finland free of vodka.

The chief benefit of Prohibition seems to lie in the absence of those swilling-places in which Scandinavians delight. The argument for and against Prohibition is neatly summed up in the question—Is clandestine drinking a greater evil than public drinking? The Finns seem to think not. But it could be argued for some time.

Life in Finland just now is fairly comfortable. There are many well-lined bourgeois. Well-dressed men, motor cars, pleasant rural villas,

48 THROUGH THE CORDON SANITAIRE

book-shops, music-shops, all point to a state of society and of civilisation which is quite Western. It is true the Finnish mark has depreciated, but at its low level it is stable. Finland is anxious for more foreign visitors, and has removed most of the obstructions to travel. There is an excellent service of boats between Finland and Stettin, also between Helsingfors and Hull, and Helsingfors and Reval. The tourists, under the circumstances, are re-appearing. They swarm every summer at the Falls of Imatra.

The cost of living is rather more than in France, but there is much less tipping. At many restaurants and some hotels tipping has been abolished. At the delightfully clean co-operative society restaurant of the Elanto in Helsingfors you can feed at cost price and there are no tips. As in present Poland, one gets confused as to when to tip and when not to tip. At one restaurant in Helsingfors when I left the small change behind I saw the hatchet-faced woman waiter dash the coins from the table to the ground in high disdain, and I am still in doubt whether I insulted thereby a respectable woman, or merely did not leave enough.

As regards travelling in modern Finland, it is both cheap and clean. It is cleaner in the third-

class carriages than in French or British third class, or in the ordinary coaches of American trains. As regards hotels, I can only say that of the six countries I passed through on my way to the Black Sea, Finland was by far the best. Even in Viborg there are some luxuriously comfortable hotels—in the German style, it is true, but efficiently conducted, if subject to midnight potations.

III

ON THE GULF OF FINLAND

THE line of Soviet Russia, writ in water, traverses Lake Ladoga. All the approaches from Finnish territory are in a military zone. Foreigners must obtain permits from the Governor of Viborg. Russians living within the zone are rarely allowed to leave it ; few fresh Russians are allowed to come in from other parts. Although Finland has recognised Soviet Russia (and one remarks the handsome new Consulates of the U.S.S.R.) there is little intercourse. The Finnish Government, a " coalition of bourgeois parties," has to fight a strong Communist and Social-Democratic tendency in its own masses, and is naturally cautious in its relations with Moscow. Dislike of Russians has survived freedom from Russia, and may take an age to disappear.

" Do you speak Russian ? " I asked of one.

" I hate them," he answered.

"You have had political trouble?" I ventured, somewhat disconcerted.

"Do not speak to me about them. It is a painful subject," he replied slowly.

The Finnish national movement develops strongly, even, I think, now partly at the expense of the Swedish element. National costumes multiply. The blue and white flag flies everywhere, even on the tables of restaurants; Suomi, the Finns' name for their country, figures everywhere. The new Finnish army is considerably on parade.

Parades of soldiers with music are characteristic of the new Finland. One frequently stops to watch detachments pass. The new army has a rather German look. Riflemen on the march generally wear the German steel helmet, coal-scuttle type. They look a somewhat stubborn and effective soldiery. Before the war the Finns were exempted from compulsory military service, a money payment being made to the central Government. There were excellent Finnish officers, and some regiments, but they were voluntarily obtained. But independence has brought its greater responsibilities, and Finland is now forced by circumstances to keep a rather substantial army. I am told there is considerable

jealousy between the newer German-trained officers and the Finnish officers of the old Russian army. Finland now wavers in her fondness for the Germans. The Swedish element in Finland, however, strongly supports the Jäger. The Finnish national element is more strongly attached to its Russian-trained officers. In the restaurants, in the cafés and hotels, one sees officers in uniform and wearing their swords. The officer has social esteem and social authority even among civilians. I observed that some of the ex-Finnish Guard officers retained their Russian decorations, even their Georgian crosses.

While these Russian officers speak Russian, it must not be thought that they use it. Everything Russian is under a cloud. But in case of war with Soviet Russia their knowledge would be useful.

"The Russians are, unhappily, our neighbours," said a Foreign Office representative to me.

"Our neighbours are always 'unhappily' our neighbours," I thought. It is "neighbours" and unhappiness over neighbours that occupies most of our thought nowadays.

Finland has a long Russian frontier, from the borders of the Arctic almost to within sight of the former capital of Russia. In the north she seeks to conciliate her blood-brothers, the Karelians ;

in the south she keeps an army ready in case the old enemy should attack her. In the north there is always the ultimate chance of Finland gaining Murmansk ; in the south, with masses of Russian emigrants on the one hand and Red Guards on the other, there is the chance still of invasion. In a brochure for the information of travellers I see the new Finland described as " one of the bulwarks of Europe against the barbaric East ".

The greater part of the Russian emigrant population is banked up against the Soviet line. There are many thousands waiting there, and if ever that line gives way they will bounce into Petrograd at once. They suffer severe disabilities at the hands of the Finns, and whatever their previous estate they are nearly all manual labourers now. Some are painfully ill and poverty-stricken, but all live on hope.

I had been asked by a ruined Russian landowner to look up his villa on the Gulf of Finland. He had a property there on Finnish territory, if only it could be disposed of. With that in view I visited Terioki and Kuokkala, and walked along the Soviet line beyond Rajajoki. On the shores of the Gulf there are thousands of ruined villas. I arrived about ten one evening at the almost deserted station of Kuokkala. No cabs, no

54 THROUGH THE CORDON SANITAIRE

porters ! The smashed or cracked and riveted plate glass stared from empty shops. On all hands I caught glimpses of wrecked or ruined houses. I stayed at the house of a Russian shoemaker. Besides making boots my worthy host dabbled in house property. I found he had a hold on several villas, though the house in which he lived was made up of component parts of other houses. He had lifted floorings, windows, doors, stoves, piecemeal, and put them together as a hobby. He had also collected furniture and linen. In the tiny room where I slept there were five elegant arm-chairs.

Next day I met a bare-footed ruffian. "Where are you staying ? " he asked. "Why, you might have stayed with me. I have a beautiful country house."

You can buy an excellent house and land for five thousand marks (£30). Or rather, you cannot buy it. No foreigner is allowed to buy any property. You must buy it in the name of an obliging Finn who will afterwards make you a present of it, for a consideration. So it means little to be in possession of a handsome property.

Every villa in the old days had its name, but all the names have been scratched off now. It is difficult for a stranger to find an old address.

Even with the help of the police one does not always succeed. Such shameful robbery and spoliation has taken place that no one is anxious to give information.

"All accounts between the Russians and ourselves are settled," said one Finn to me. "We are not called upon to do anything more for them."

One might, however, have expected some sympathy with suffering. Every villa in Kuokkala and Terioki represents something left out of the lost fortune of a ruined Russian. Had these places remained under Russian rule, it is true, they would have been looted just the same. But it is not for an advanced bourgeois country like Finland to allow such things to happen in her territory.

I found servants of my friend. They remembered how stout he was ; he has gone thin enough now, earning his living on a French farm ; remembered his little girl and the dog. I found the little grocer shop that supplied them with sugar and tea, and then the villa itself. It was in the charge of a General's widow formerly very rich, now without teeth, without food, without means, fantastically in debt and muddled in mind.

The villa was all closed in with fast-growing

56 THROUGH THE CORDON SANITAIRE

pinces, like the house of the Sleeping Beauty when she had been put to sleep for a hundred years. But no one slept there. It had evidently been entered and ransacked several times. Its mattresses and its arm-chairs and sofas had been cut and unstuffed in search of jewels and gold. Its stairs were strewn with Russian books, and especially with the pale yellow-coloured supplements of the *Niva Magazine*. The windows were all broken, but some had been boarded up with wood. Taxes not having been paid, the property had been seized by the Finnish Government. Most of the empty villas of the district were in the same plight. If they are not claimed within five years and the Government indemnified, the villas are scheduled for disposal.

Since no foreigner can buy property, the market is restricted. Finns are buying houses and transporting them to other parts of Finland. Houses on wheels roll away from the Gulf. By day there is a constant stream of carts bearing parts of villas to the railway. Many Russians find employment in breaking up villas and stacking the parts for transport. There is a melancholy sight of heaped-up "innards" of houses at the railway station.

The moujiks ask, "What shall we do when we have broken down all the villas?"

"Go back to Russia," say the Finns. "That is where you belong."

The Administration hopes that when conditions on the frontier zone get bad enough, the Russian population there will of its own accord go over the boundary and seek life under the Bolsheviks. As yet, however, this policy of despair does not seem to be bringing fruit.

Some of the cleverer Russians have started a peasant-art industry, and are receiving orders from various parts of the world. They make excellent cigar-boxes out of Karelian bark, and all manner of cases and chests from the softer woods. I lunched every day with one of the workers, a Petrograd merchant of sixty, once possessing his hat shop and millinery emporium on the Nevsky Prospect, one of the links between Paris and the women of the capital. He seemed as happy as a child at his humble task in the peasant-art workshop.

Kuokkala and Terioki and the other well-known resorts have no future unless free of access to the great Russian city population. They are too far from Helsingfors and Abo to attract visitors.

Now on the long empty beach there is room enough for bathing by people of both sexes, more

58 THROUGH THE CORDON SANITAIRE

or less naked. About a dozen people came from Petrograd this year, from the Red, dead Russia on the other side, to luxuriate in this qualified freedom in Finland. Bringing the Russian ethic with them, the wives and daughters of the *nepmani*, the new rich of Leningrad, lie sun-bathing on the sand in the scantiest attire, or go into the water in their chemises, a sight for mere men.

It is brown, brackish, shallow water, fresh as that of the large lakes ; one paddles a quarter of a mile before the water reaches the waist. Not an ideal place for bathing, but then Russians like the sea at watering-places to be knee-deep and quiet. It is pleasant, however, when one reaches the deeper water. It seems as if the opposite shore were very near ; the dome of the cathedral in Kronstadt gleams in the sunshine ; factory chimneys of Soviet Russia smoke across the sky and one thinks of the new proletarian conditions therein. As you swim out to sea, Kronstadt grows clearer and clearer before the eyes ; it was like approaching a dreamland country to me.

IV

IN REPIN'S STUDIO

SOVIET Russia has been repudiated by Russia's great artists. The national school of painting there is broken up. What has happened to the less-known artists it is difficult to say, but the famous ones have made their homes abroad. Roerich has come into his own in America, where his pictures have been suitably housed at public expense. Repin, the greatest of them all, sits and works in Finland.

He is eighty years old ; his canvases are better known in Russia than those of Turner are in England. He is acknowledged by the Soviet regime as much as by the Russian *émigrés* to be a veritable king of painters, and very gladly would Lunacharsky receive him in Moscow if he could be prevailed upon to return.

He was, of course, more identified with St. Petersburg than with Moscow, and is greatly

60 THROUGH THE CORDON SANITAIRE

attached to the old capital, where he still has friends now languishing in poverty.

"I have had to give up corresponding with them," said the old man. "My letters do not reach. It is too much for me ; I cannot bring myself to write Leningrad on the envelopes, and the post now refuses to deliver letters unless the new name is used."

It would be very lonely for Repin in his villa "Penati" on the Gulf of Finland were it not for the company of his son and daughter and the great vivid canvases with which he is surrounded. Few can get to Kuokkala to do him homage. His life is a hermit's life, far from the haunts of men.

He lives but an afternoon's stroll from the Soviet line, upon the old high-road to St. Petersburg. The old milestones tell him how far it used to be. But it is a closed way. No motors come bounding along from the palaces of the Neva any more ; no peasant carts toil with produce to the great market. So near and yet so far !

On the other hand, it is far to Helsingfors, the nearest port of embarkation for Western Europe and the places where the exiled Russians now mostly live. Few cultured Russians remain in Finland if they can get away. For there is no possibility of practising a profession—doctors may

not cure, lawyers may not plead. One of the greatest surgeons in Russia, Professor Zaidler, remains in Finland, but is debarred from using his great skill and knowledge. He probably will go to Czecho-Slovakia or France in course of time. Besides Repin and Zaidler I know of no other distinguished Russian *émigrés* in Finland, though there are several landless aristocrats still in the cities.

The thirty thousand Russians in the Gulf of Finland rayon are mostly country folk and the one-time workers and servers of the resorts. They know little about art, but they are nevertheless proud of Repin. They look after him in the street ; they flock to him at his studio on certain days. Miss Repin keeps open house for visitors on Wednesday, and her father indefatigably conducts parties among his works.

The greatest picture is one on which the artist has been working forty years. It is very large, and represents a Little Russian religious crowd bearing in triumph a wonder-working ikon. The ikon is preceded by a marvellous deacon, a huge fellow with tremendous face all lighted up with faith and the popular religious emotion. His mouth is wide with song, and his processional aspect gives great drive and movement to the whole of the scene. In the accompanying crowd are

62 THROUGH THE CORDON SANITAIRE

carefully studied faces. It is not a portrait of a scene so much as a synthetic picture of emotional religious scenes in Russia. The faces are faces seen by Repin at various occasions in his life, remembered and then painted in. The religious festivities of the Russian monasteries often brought pilgrims from exceedingly remote places and reproduced facial types of bygone centuries. Repin has evidently an eye for these traditional physiognomies and has immortalised several in this picture.

A somewhat similar method of collection and study seems to be employed in another great canvas which, however, is likely to remain unfinished, a representation of a solemn opening of the Russian Senate. The chairs are all there, but only a few of the historical personages sitting in them have been painted in. Each is to be a study in portraiture, and indeed Repin was able to show a remarkable series of preliminary sketches. In the actual picture much care has been lavished on Count Witte, a favourite of Repin's. But even the seat where the Tsar should be enthroned is vacant, and a strange impression is conveyed by the portrait of Von Plehve standing facing the empty chair and giving his report *vis-à-vis* with the invisible.

Another very striking picture is a portrait of Kerensky, commissioned from America during the days of Kerensky's short fame, but never delivered.

"They came to me and said, 'Do not think about the money; any number of dollars that you like to mention will be forthcoming for this portrait,' " said Repin to me. "I have, however, kept it for myself."

It was done during the last days of Kerensky's power. The old man described to me how for the last sitting he went to the Winter Palace and, finding it completely empty, wandered from room to room, seeking Kerensky, who had, however, gone for good.

"Priceless treasures absolutely unguarded," said Repin. "And the only sound that of the soldiers in the Palace Yard practising gymnastics and playing games."

He has painted the face of Kerensky in the style of the false Dmitri.

"The usurper," said the old man, quietly and complacently, as we stood and looked at the small, vain, neurasthenical face.

I have never seen Kerensky, but I should say his portrait by Repin is more unforgettable than he.

64 THROUGH THE CORDON SANITAIRE

There is a fine portrait also of the ancient village priest of Kuokkala, now somewhat of a crony of Repin's, a weather-beaten, suffering greybeard whose lined and pink face rises from the mass of a cope of gold brocade.

Portraits of priests are not bestowed on churches, otherwise this might fittingly decorate the wooden church on the hillock among the Kuokkala pines. Repin is a devoted worshipper there, is always at church service, stands in the choir and, despite his eighty years, raises his voice quite audibly in the anthems and responses. Repin loves his Church for its colour and its music, and because it is a great national treasure.

Some one once said Russia has three very great inheritances—her language, her folk-lore, and her Church. How much the Church means to a Russian one cannot quite understand in the West. One needs to be a Christian Russian to understand it.



V

IN THE REPUBLIC OF ESTHONIA

WANDERING one wet afternoon in the Kadriorg Park, outside Reval, or rather Tallin, as the Esthonian capital is now called, I saw a strange sight. Mounting some stone steps leading from a soaked avenue, I glimpsed a gigantic gleaming head of metal hiding, as it were, behind a shed. A thought of recognition crossed my mind. An old man was coming down the steps towards me, so I hailed him.

"Is that not the monument of Peter the Great?" I asked.

"Yes," said he solemnly, and lifted his hat.

66 THROUGH THE CORDON SANITAIRE

Returning on my steps, I then walked into the yard where the monument lay. It was on the same lorry which had brought it some years ago, coat-tails higher than its head, sword-point clumsily sticking up in air, face to the wooden wall of a house which was built perhaps by Peter's men themselves. The wheels of the lorry had sunk into the soft ground ; the great sides of the monarch were all wet ; the rain ran off his face, off his nose, into a wooden rain-water barrel at his head. It is Reval's finest monument, I am told. The Esthonian politicians could not stand it in the midst of their capital. One thing, however, rather touched me. The statue was not wilfully damaged, and it was left on the lorry in the evident expectation of having to be taken back again in a hurry to its former place of honour in the Peetri Place.

It is curious that the Finns left Alexander II. standing in the Nikolai Place at Helsingfors, but their Esthonian cousins turned Peter out-of-doors. The Esthonians are much more friendly to the Russians than the Finns are. Indeed, the majority of the inhabitants of Esthonia would be more than content to live under decent Russian rule ; they would not tolerate Bolshevism, but they would be at peace federated to a democratic

IN THE REPUBLIC OF ESTHONIA 67

Russia. The same cannot be said of the Finns or the Poles or the Letts.

It is repeatedly said by the Russians that of all the new countries lying across the centre of Europe, Esthonia is the one which treats them best. Russian is spoken freely everywhere; there is a vigorous and unfettered Russian newspaper, the *Poslednia Izvestia*; tram-conductors, railway servants and police do not object to answering questions in Russian. It is true all the streets and many villages and towns have been re-named in Esthonian. Some places have three names, like Tartu, which is also Dorpat and also Yurief, causing more confusion, however, than personal unpleasantness.

Landing at Reval (Tallin), one steps upon the European mainland and realises our new sense of instability. There is a tremor under foot which you do not feel in Finland. "We are living on a volcano" is a bromide in Reval. Esthonia is an accidental and experimental country. The Germans expected to rule over it and had deep German roots there; the Russians in the old days governed it efficiently though they denied the Esthonians all part in the administration. It belongs economically to Russia, and perhaps cannot continue to exist without broad affiliations.

68 THROUGH THE CORDON SANITAIRE

An inexperienced race has achieved nationhood ; clerks have become Ministers of State, servers masters, tenants landlords. It has no white bread and little black. Its shops and warehouses are stacked with goods for which it can find no market. It is isolated, with enemies or rivals on each hand, and has to exist on one and a half old Russian provinces. Like a weak dwarf with a large head, it can hardly support its capital. The fine old city of Reval languishes at the end of its railways.

In the expectation of becoming a unique channel for trade with Soviet Russia, Reval has been a great centre of activity. Import-export offices were opened in every street. Factories over-produced. Banks extended large credits. The huge, blood-coloured silken flag of the S.S.S.R. waved in front of the Bolshevik Mission. But then it began also to wave in other parts of the world, and the Bolsheviks bought what they required, not in Esthonia, but in countries where it was more politically useful. Thence the unparalleled depression in the country.

Esthonian marks had one price in a bank and another on the street ; on the black *birzha*, as it is called, you got much more for your pound or your five-dollar bill. The supposedly gold-

backed Esthonian crown seems to be a hypothetical currency. It is not seemingly in actual use.

One wonders how this poor country can support its foreign service of ministers and consuls all over the world ; its domestic ministry, and its army and navy. It is obliged to keep in readiness an army of some fifteen thousand men : ten infantry regiments and one cavalry. It guards with these its frontier with Soviet Russia. Its line from Narva to Isborsk is largely a line of defence with forts and guns. Its navy is probably not worth the name—a gunboat of the *Novik* type, a raised destroyer, two old Russian boats. But Esthonia is ready to guard her shores, and has at her disposal a plentiful supply of mines.

The republic started with considerable resources, due, in part, to the expropriation of the traditional landowners. The owners of land and property, both Russian and German, were turned out of their estates, which were sold over their heads without a copeck of compensation. I talked to a Baroness whose husband was killed in the war. She was left with children and without pension, and lives now in a room of her own house and pays rent for it. I met Russians like the fine old General Baranof and his wife who had property there and lost everything. Nothing has even been

70 THROUGH THE CORDON SANITAIRE

paid for the furniture in the houses or the livestock on the estates. Inventories were made and promises given, that is all. Even those mortgagees who had lent money on the security of property were not compensated in respect of their losses.

The Esthonian peasants were allowed to buy the land from the Government at a low price and were helped in every way; but, as in other countries where expropriation of this kind has been effected, —Mexico, for instance—it has been found that the production of the smallholders is considerably less than the former production of the large estates. Some of the German barons had the reputation of grinding down their tenants, but at least on their estates the cows were milked at fixed times and not at the convenience of a peasant-wife.

Along the Russian line, which is largely the line of the Narva River and the lakes of Peipus and Pskov, one does not realise much change in the economic condition. That is more marked on the more German shores of the Finnish Gulf and the Baltic. I went from Reval to the mouth of the Narva, once Ust-Narova, now Gungerburg; once a great seaside resort of rich Russians, now greatly decayed, its fine Kursaal sadly neglected. It is just in front of the Soviet line, and one sails up

the Narva River with Bolshevik Russia but slightly removed on the one hand and Esthonia on the other. The district is almost entirely Russian. Narva, with the mighty walls of ancient Ivangorod, is a historic Russian town; so of course is Isborsk in the south. It is better far that they should be in Esthonian care and behind Esthonian guns than in the hands of the Bolsheviks. No Russian here has any doubt of that.

Many Russians, moreover, have found shelter in Esthonia who know they would be destroyed if they fell into the hands of the Reds. Many of those nearest to Judenitch have, for instance, remained in the country.

Like a sad whisper from the half-forgotten days before the war, the poet Igor Severanin, once the craze of every schoolgirl, gives poetical evenings at Ust-Narova and reads his latest works to those Russians who will come and hear.

The fast-flowing river runs to the sea, bearing vast quantities of logs which are caught up at Narva and sawn into planks. It is the only industry which makes much showing. The failure in the Russian timber industry has benefited both Finland and Esthonia—though Finland much more, because Finland is exploiting primeval forest, whereas Esthonia has only an inheritance of

well-worked woodland. The Finns generally hold a large trading reserve of first-class standards ; the Esthonians a moderate quantity of second class. The Russians of Narva are for the most part poverty-stricken, living from hand to mouth, studying the Esthonian language at odd moments, reading, going to church. Narva has a beautiful white cathedral, and it presented a marvellous sight when I was there at the service on Transfiguration Eve.

I came upon an Old Believer in the neighbourhood of Yurief. He seemed very much soured by what is going on, and especially by the change in the calendar from old to new style. He combed his long beard and talked of prophecies to be fulfilled and times of persecution. I talked with him of his sect : apparently none think of the new conditions as permanent.

The Russian fishers on the lakes are very poor ; they used to find a ready market for their smelts which they put on the lateral railway running from Pskov to Gdov, now Bolshevik and inaccessible to them. They are said to make a living by smuggling, but do not look like it. There is, nevertheless, peace upon the Narva and on the lakes. Esthonia is obliged by treaty to have no military concentrations in the frontier region, and there are no armed

boats on the waters. Finland has ample means of defence upon Ladoga and her frontier lakes, but the Esthonians have no machine-gun patrol-boats and no provision for mine-laying on Lakes Pskov and Peipus.

Esthonia must be thought to be holding places like Pechora and Isborsk in trust for Russia. Like the ancient city of Pskov, opposite which they stand, they are of great national interest, and entirely Russian. For some reason which I did not discover, no Russians from other parts of Esthonia are allowed to visit Pechora. The League of Nations passports granted to Russian *émigrés* are all marked "Not Pechora." I was told that it was part of a plan to Esthonianise the district.

I stood on the great fortress walls built in the time of Ivan the Terrible, and talked to one of the pale, simple old Fathers who carry on the life and the tradition of the monastery. It used to be an underground hermitage. Isborsk was built in the time of Rurik, and the hermits began to burrow into the hill. The white-walled monastery was built over the caves. With lighted candle you can now explore them and look on the hands of the ancient dead.

The Archimandrite Cornely built this fortress wall. Ivan the Terrible, returning from Lithuania

74 THROUGH THE CORDON SANITAIRE

heard of it with displeasure, and when he arrived at Pechora he struck off the head of the Abbot bowing in welcome of him. It is not the wall and the Archimandrite that make it holy, however, but the hermits and the caves.

Near this monastery live the Seta tribe, converted from Paganism to Orthodoxy only half a century ago. Though akin in language to Esthonians and Finns, they identify themselves through their religion more with the Russians than with the others. It is an obscure region, heavily forested, little visited, and possessed of many ancient peoples with outlandish customs.

I turned somewhat aside and visited Dorpat (Yurief, Tartu), and found it very full of educational life. The university is crowded with Esthonians. The nation is trying to educate itself at once. Every one wants a university education for his children. Girls have now the same opportunity as boys in this respect. Russian and German take a back seat. Education is conducted from an Esthonian point of view. Dorpat has, in fact, become a factory for a nation. Out of it the future Esthonia must grow. Esthonia, as I have said, is accidental and experimental, and, despite all qualifications, an interesting accident and an interesting experiment.

VI

IN THE CATHEDRAL AT REVAL

OFTEN in life one goes to do a certain thing and finds oneself doing something else, something quite unpremeditated and unexpected.

So I reflected, as with candle in hand I knelt on the stone floor of the Russian cathedral at Reval. Round about were a number of unfamiliar people doing the same, and in the midst of us was an open coffin on trestles and a Russian General lying in it facing towards the altar of the cathedral. A priest was saying prayers for the peace of his soul.

I had set out at four to find a certain Count X., once Minister at Rome, to whom I had an introduction. He was not at his rooms. They said to me there, "Your best plan will be to go to the cathedral; he is bound to be there at seven o'clock."

So I went to the cathedral and inquired for

76 THROUGH THE CORDON SANITAIRE

him at the door of one of those who sold candles. "Yes, he is there," said he, and led me into the congregation. I threaded a way in and out of the throng, and as I passed the coffin I looked upon the aged, peaceful, and simple face of the dead Russian General lying in state with his head gently raised upon a white pillow, a tiny ikon in one of his marble hands. The flowers of Esthonia were lavished at his feet. All was serene and beautiful there in the presence of the dead. The old soldier's many campaigns had closed at last. There was the peace of the stars on his brows and his eyes.

"Count X. is not here. He *was* here. Perhaps he will come."

So with candle in hand I found myself waiting and, as it were, praying for the peace of a soldier's soul.

Then the candles were put out and collected on to trays, and the people got up from their knees and gathered into groups and conversed, but the Count did not come.

"Your best plan would be to come here the same time to-morrow," I was told.

Next day accordingly I did the same, and might have been seen in the midst of a much larger congregation looking wistfully at a coffin about which now were many more flowers.

Walking up the steep cobbled way to the cathedral I had noticed a man with no legs or thighs, a top of a man on a sort of tray on little wheels, struggling in the dust. He had wooden blocks in his hands, the size and shape of four-pound weights, and with these he moved his ragged buttock over the humps of the stones. Presently, as I knelt, I was aware of some movement behind me, at the door of the cathedral. Some one had lifted the cripple and, carrying him up the steep stone steps, had put him down by the door. Then, *clack, clack* with his wooden blocks he came forward toward the coffin and settled down a yard from where I knelt.

"He served under him," somebody had time to whisper, and the idea thrilled like a violin string in the soul, banishing all other thoughts than those of the dead General and the cripple.

The prayers for the dead went forward, and a marvellous bass voice searched the heavens above and the earth beneath, reverberating from stones and whispering about screens. The candles burned and lit up our faces, and then the candles were put out and our faces jumped into the grey light of the every-day. The priest gave his blessing and we went away.

Curiously enough, next Sunday morning, with

78 THROUGH THE CORDON SANITAIRE

map in hand, Esthonian map, I painfully sought another address. The streets of Reval have each two or three different names. I was verifying turnings by their Esthonian names, and I came accidentally to the cathedral. I stopped. There was a crowd on the steps. One vast choric throng within was singing the "Eternal Memory" hymn, which swelled from the stone floors to the golden domes. Once more I found myself in the church. It was the moment of the bearing out of the dead. There issued forth a singing multitude and a man carrying on a velvet cushion the ribbons and medals and crosses of the soldier. Then came the many stretched hands of those holding or touching the coffin as it passed, and then the marvellous flower tribute. In the midst of the cortège I saw Count X.; in a corner of the cathedral waited the legless soldier. Many hearts beat as one, and it seemed as if somehow Russia for a moment realised herself in the presence of one who had lived and died for her.

At another time I had a long talk with the Count which I will not repeat here. "We Russians are nothing", was the note of it. "I am nothing. I am a man *sans état*—look at my passport. Yes, the General was a fine old man; served in all his country's wars, died in poverty

after a long death-bed suffering. But what does it signify now ? He was like me—a pariah.”

I offered the Count a waterproof to shield him from the rain as he walked home. “ Oh, it is nothing,” said he, waving his hand. “ I pass.”

“ I am a pariah and I pass,” he called out to me over the dark cobbles in the wet as he hastened away.

VII

THE COMMUNIST RISING

SINCE Soviet Russia as at present constituted has no ice-free port in the Baltic, there is a constant assumption that some time or other she will make a bid to regain at least the city of Reval (Tallin). This assumption in itself is a standing menace to Esthonia, and is only made light of by Esthonian statesmen in order to convince Western Europe of Esthonia's stability.

It is urged that by the Dorpat Treaty of February 1920 Soviet Russia is guaranteed free access to Reval, and that she has therefore no economic reason for desiring possession of that port. Quite obviously, however, a great power like Russia is likely to be considerably harassed by its Esthonian doorkeeper. The treaty is a useful instrument for the waiting-time of Russia's economic recovery. But should that recovery become complete, either under the Bolshevik

Government or under any other Government, one can quite understand that Russia would begin to have strong cause of complaint in the Baltic, having lost the harbours of Reval, Riga, Libava, and the rest. She would hardly be likely to rest content with Esthonian permission to use Reval, but would be likely to proceed to take possession of a port which was of such vital necessity to her.

We have in Esthonia a transitional regime. Esthonia's *raison d'être* is that she could be a link in the cordon of obstructions between Russia and Western Europe. Good-will towards Esthonia has been balanced by ill-will towards Soviet Russia. But the recognition of Soviet Russia by France and England greatly affects the balance. If ill-will towards Russia disappears, then as a natural consequence some indifference toward the sanitary cordon will set in.

Meanwhile, however, the Esthonians, having taken Europe at her word, have been making plans for making the State of Esthonia permanent. A strong patriotism has developed. And there has developed also a strong material interest on the part of the newcomers to power in Esthonia. Esthonians would therefore naturally be indignant at any weakening in Europe's loyalty

towards their nation and the integrity of their territory.

Yet who believes that the League of Nations or the Powers of Western Europe would stir a finger to save Esthonia if the Red Army descended upon it with intention of conquest? Esthonia's only hope would be in her Baltic cousins, the Finns and the Letts, who are themselves not immune from danger of invasion, and certainly not strong enough to lend with safety a portion of their own means of defence.

In 1923 Latvia and Esthonia entered into a defensive alliance and are bound to come to one another's help in case of an unprovoked attack. Should Esthonia under these circumstances break off diplomatic relationship with Soviet Russia and declare a state of war, Latvia would automatically do the same. But while this is a prudent agreement, it by no means follows that its provisions would be adequate or effective.

Soviet Russia certainly does not seem disposed at this juncture to send an armed force against Esthonia. War of this old-fashioned kind has been repeatedly denounced by the Communist leaders. "Down with war; hail to the struggle of the classes!" is the cry. If Esthonia is to be destroyed the forces of destruction will be made

to appear to come from within Esthonia itself. Only when a new revolution had been achieved would the moment of opportunity for the Red Army have arrived, and then it would be too late to seek military help from Latvia or Finland. Western Europe might also be persuaded to think that what had taken place was merely a domestic revolution, an insurgence of a naturally wild proletariat against an inefficient administration.

My impression is that Soviet Russia would cloak the iniquity of her conquest by establishing a new republic of Esthonia, a mock republic kindred to the republics of Ukrainia, Georgia, Moldavia, and Karelia, part of the United Sovietistic Socialist Republics, and that their imperialistic conquest would be hailed as a triumph of the proletariat of Esthonia over their bourgeois masters.

For the republic of Esthonia to-day, though founded on measures of expropriation and ultra-democratic reform, is a bourgeois one, and is engaged in daily warfare with the Communistic ferment in the masses. It has recognised Soviet Russia, and has let in with diplomatic privileges not its commercial allies but its political foes. From the Red headquarters the work of undermining the present republic goes steadily on. The Esthonian police are vigilant, the Government is

84 THROUGH THE CORDON SANITAIRE

energetic, but to an outsider it seems that the odds against Esthonia are particularly heavy.

With the help of the Soviet Mission in Reval, a Communist coup was planned for October 28, 1924. The existing bourgeois Government was to have been overthrown. The Esthonian Soviet Republic was to have been proclaimed, and a Dictatorship established. The police had knowledge of the conspiracy, but it was thought they would fear to meet it and that they might desert to the other side. Apparently, however, the strength of the Government was misjudged. The conspiracy failed lamentably. There was a round-up of conspirators, and 149 of them were arrested.

The Soviet Mission in Reval was naturally apprehensive of the evidence which might be brought forward in the trial, and therefore did its utmost to secure the release of the prisoners. General Budenny appeared on the Esthonian frontier with some detachments of Red troops. An armed attack was made in Reval upon the State prison, with a view to obtaining a compulsory gaol delivery. The Government, however, was successful in repelling the prison-breakers, and it refused to be intimidated by the Red Guards on the frontier. The 149 were brought to trial.

The 14th November was the first day of the trial, and it was a stormy one. The prisoners, when brought into Court, behaved in the most impenitent fashion, hurling abuse right and left, and violently insulting the judges. Twelve of the worst of them had to be removed, and among them was ex-Deputy Tomp.

Tomp was tried by Court-martial in the courtyard, and condemned there and then to death. The sentence caused consternation, but it was carried out. M. Kovietski, from the Soviet Mission, visited every member of the Government in turn to try and obtain a reprieve. Three automobiles with Soviet representatives stood at the entrances of the Ministry Offices waiting for orders. But no Esthonian stirred a finger to save Tomp, and he was shot within a few hours of his trial.

Next day, when the rest of the prisoners were brought to Court, it was found that their demeanour had changed. They remained remarkably quiet. The firm conduct of the trial by the authorities obtained admirable justification, and made an impression, not in Esthonia alone, but in all of the Baltic States, each of which is subject to the same policy of insurrectionary Bolshevism.

The violent behaviour of Tomp and of the

86 THROUGH THE CORDON SANITAIRE

other prisoners is considered to have been due to the fact that they knew that a Communist rising on a large scale was about to take place. They were confident of ultimate release, and they thought by their audacious bearing they could unsteady the Government and facilitate the coming *coup d'état*.

But the Communist rising was ill-timed, or else action lagged upon decision. It is one thing to have a plan ; another to carry it out. Moscow truly was enraged by the way things were going at Reval. Demonstrations of the proletariat against Esthonia were staged in various cities. Tomp was proclaimed a martyr ; a frontier village was named after him. Yamburg was re-named after another conspirator. The Communist International appealed to the Workers of the World. Troops were made to parade in front of the Esthonian Consulate in Petrograd. Not content with naming a village after Tomp, the Bolsheviks decided to call the substantial town of Gdov Tomp also. It seems to be one of their pet methods of showing excitement, the changing of names of cities : Petrograd is Leningrad, Simbirsk is Uliansk, Elizavetpol is Zinovieffsk, Tsaritsin is Stalingrad. This is perhaps an imitation of the Japanese hari-kiri. The hari-kiri of names of

cities is not, however, likely to make much appeal to the imagination.

The real attack on the present institutions of Esthonia was made a fortnight after Tomp's execution. This was on December 1, 1924. I append an account of it which I have obtained from the Esthonian Government :

“ On December 1 small detachments of armed Communists attempted to capture government institutions. Organised detachments attempted to force their way into the War Ministry, Army Headquarters, Central Government Building, Railway Station, Central Telegraph and Telephone Office and Police Stations. Ten men managed to get into the War Ministry, some of them disguised in soldiers' uniforms. The attack was immediately suppressed by the guards. One Communist was killed and one woman servant. The General Railway Station was occupied by about twenty Communists. All officers attempting to travel to the Military Schools at Tondi (near Tallin) were captured at the Station, but their lives were saved by the Mounted Police Reserve. At 5 A.M. three men penetrated into the Staff quarters of the 10th Regiment, two of these again dressed as soldiers, shot three officers, and rushed into the offices of the 'Liaison' battalion, where they killed the officer on guard and severely wounded an official. At 5.25 A.M. an armed

detachment forced its way into the Tank Garage. The attack was suppressed immediately; one Communist attempted to put a tank into operation but was shot and two soldiers were wounded. At the same time the Communists occupied the Central Government Building and the Parliament and the residence of the President, but were soon ejected by troops and partly arrested. At 5.25 A.M. a detachment of fifty men forced its way into the Military School at Tondi, threw four hand grenades into the Cadets' Mess, killed one cadet in the bedrooms and wounded several. After a severe struggle the Communists were thrown out, two of them were killed, one wounded, and eight arrested. Three cadets were killed, three badly wounded, and seven slightly wounded. A detachment of thirty men occupied the Aerodrome, arrested the officer on guard, but were later repulsed by troops arriving. Two Communists were killed, three arrested. Seeing their attempt was failing, the Communists forced two airmen to start for Russia, but one of them landed near Narva on Esthonian territory.

“ Total losses : 17 killed, including 5 officers and 3 cadets ; wounded 38, including 3 officers, 19 soldiers, and 16 civilians. About 60 Communists were arrested. The Minister of Communications was killed at the Railway Station. Martial law was proclaimed over the whole country, and General Laddon appointed Commander-

in - Chief. The Parliament unanimously voted special powers to the Government. Courts-martial are trying those arrested. No disturbances have occurred in other parts of the country."

As the Esthonian Government is anxious to safeguard its credit and to be considered stable, I see no reason to think that its report is exaggerated. On the contrary, judging from supplementary information, I should consider the rising a more terrible event than it appears as reported. Detailed plans of Communistic action in case of success have been discovered, including substantial lists of persons to be executed. Had a Soviet Republic been established in Tallin it is likely that an Esthonian terror there would have ensued.

In the eyes of the other Cordon States the rising ranks as an event of first-class importance. The Finns were so much impressed by it that their supplementary budgets for naval and military defence were passed at once without a murmur from the Radical elements in the Diet. And although no cognisance was taken of the matter officially, yet it was greatly discussed at the Baltic Conference at Helsingfors, where representatives of Finland, Esthonia, Latvia, and Poland met to consider what could be done to serve their mutual economic interest.

Curiously enough, British Labour has been asked to render its sympathies to those who were executed or imprisoned as a result of this abortive rebellion, and we have the spectacle of an ex-M.P. of the Labour Party touring Esthonia under the guidance of an interpreter from the Soviet Mission in Reval, and then appealing to the British working men and women to sympathise with their persecuted brothers and sisters of the Baltic.

I gather that the Esthonian Government is stronger now that the Communist trouble has come to a head and has been dealt with. This political improvement also synchronises with an increase in economic stability. The export trade makes progress, inflation of the currency has ceased, and the crown in 1925 seems to be stable at 1800 to the pound sterling.

Nevertheless, though these factors favour the continued independence of Esthonia, it will be gathered that the political position still remains problematical. An aggravating source of weakness lies in the social and ethnographical muddle. Russians and Germans are strong elements in the new Esthonia, and these, having been dispossessed of property and of position, are not factors on which the Government can entirely rely. The working-class, though not ready for Bolshevism,

is discontented, owing to the difficulty of employers in finding adequate wages in the depreciated currency. Therefore, despite strong efforts made to quell Bolshevism, the safety of the present Esthonian republic, the northernmost buffer State of the European mainland, cannot yet be said to be assured.

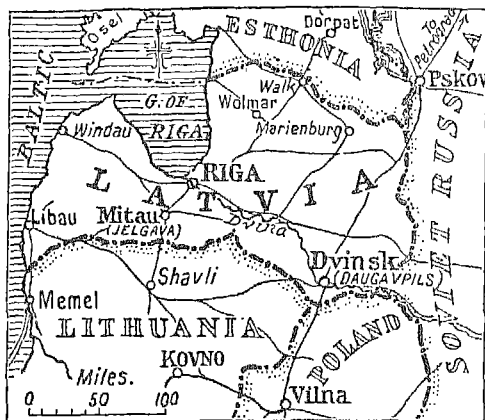
The suggestion has occasionally been mooted that since Esthonia is a valuable portion of the old Russian Empire she should be held responsible for a proportion of the Russian debt. Soviet Russia, however, has publicly relieved Esthonia of any responsibility.

Chapter II. of Article XII. of the Treaty of Dorpat (February 1920) reads as follows :

" Esthonia will bear no responsibility for any debts or other obligations of Russia, and in particular for those which arise from the issue of paper money, Treasury bonds, foreign or international loans, or for guarantees of loans issued by various institutions or undertakings, etc. ; all claims of the creditors of Russia for the share of the debts regarding Esthonia should be addressed to Russia only."

As Russia technically no longer exists, this seems a convenient arrangement.

It would, however, strengthen the position of Esthonia and other Succession states if it could take upon itself, even nominally, any proportional responsibility for Russia's debts. There is no diplomatic advantage to the young republic in being thus freed from Russia's debts.



VIII

IN RIGA AND DVINSK

DESPITE the famous limerick of the lively young lady from Riga, who went for a ride on a tiger, you must pronounce it Reega. The great city of the Baltic has a gentler-sounding name than those people think who will say Ryga. It rhymes graciously for the Lettish poets hymning the praise of their ancient capital.

Yet there are those who say they know all about Riga and Ryga, but nothing about Latvia. The Latvian Minister told me an amusing story at a farewell luncheon given to him recently by the Baltic Circle in London. A case was proceeding in the High Court, and mention was made of Latvia.

“ Before we go on,” said the Judge, “ be good enough to tell us what is Latvia.”

“ It is one of the new Balkan States, my lord,” was the reply, and the case went on. Latvia is the country of the Letts, and the Letts are a subdivision of the ancient Lithuanian race. Letts are Protestants ; Lithuanians are Catholics ; and their language is as close akin as Portuguese and Spanish. The Letts are a new nation but an old race. Never before in the world’s history has there been a State of Latvia. And when the Great War began, Latvia was entirely unforeseen. Yet we have now a republic of several years’ standing on a fair and not unprosperous land. The Letts of to-day, with their independence, have received a goodly inheritance of cities and towns, railways, bridges, markets. Latvia is not in a primitive state ; it is well shod with stone, it possesses very fine buildings of all kinds. And Riga, its capital, is one of the finest cities of Central Europe. It has the greatest amount of trade of all the cities of the Baltic.

Riga was built by the Germans and Russians of several centuries. Though the red-peaked North-German roofs and narrow spires give the dominant note, there is an extraordinary diversity of styles and contours. The old cathedral was

built early in the thirteenth century ; St. Peter's Church, with its hatpin steeple four hundred and sixty feet high, dates from 1406. There are magnificent old guild-houses and exchanges. The observant eye realises quite easily the ancient Hanseatic town behind the modern capital with its constructional iron and its white façades. The twentieth-century offices and shops and warehouses have a seventeenth-century background. It is a great city of business where vast districts have the drabness of Berlin. But the business aspect is happily lost in the spacious public gardens and parks, and it is forced into a second place by manifold architectural grandeur expressive of Teuton and Slav. By common consent Riga is a very pleasant place. It is larger, cleaner, and more beautiful than Reval, the capital of Esthonia ; softer, more human, more cultured than Helsingfors, the Finnish capital. It is incomparably superior to Kovno, the capital of neighbouring Lithuania. Some people even prefer it to Warsaw. It is so much better than Kovno that some European diplomats sent to study the situation in Lithuania prefer to do so from a base at Riga rather than take up their abode in the sister capital. Cost of living has, no doubt, some persuasive power. Latvia is one of the cheapest of countries

to live in. A room in a first-class hotel costs three or four shillings. It is not difficult to live in comfort on ten shillings a day, whereas in Lithuania it would cost a pound, and in Warsaw thirty shillings a day.

Latvia has stabilised her currency, and has issued a remarkably charming national coinage of lats, something like our Victorian sixpences in design, but much larger and possessing perhaps more silver. The lat has a hundred santims, a nickel coinage. But it should be said there are also paper roubles, fifty of them to a lat, and the people as a whole have not yet disaccustomed themselves from thinking in roubles. As a convenience for travellers, there are bureaux at some of the railway stations where a very fair exchange is given for other currencies.

There are, however, few tourists, few pleasure-seekers. I did not once overhear the American accent in an hotel. Possibly it is considered unsafe to travel in these parts of Europe, but of course, as far as Latvia is concerned, she has herself to blame in this respect. She discourages pleasure-travel to her shores. The *visa* has not been easy to obtain, and it has been expensive. It has been thought that as Latvia grows no wheat of her own it would be a mistake to encourage idle people to

96 THROUGH THE CORDON SANITAIRE

come there and help to eat up the food supply. This fallacy has been pointed out in several Lettish newspapers, and it has been shown how advantageous it would have been to have received into the country a flow of dollars and pounds from tourists. Such a flow is decidedly helpful to both France and Italy, and might with profit be applied to little Latvia.

Latvia, and especially Riga, is a very clean country. The Letts are like the Finns in that they have a deep-rooted habit of cleanliness. Waste paper and rubbish do not litter the streets. One can count upon a clean bed in an hotel and an absence of insects. In this how unlike Russians, Poles, and even Lithuanians !

Of the Western European languages, German is the most useful, though it is not now encouraged as a medium of conversation. Returned Lettish-Americans speak a kind of English. English, it must be confessed, is painfully rare ; French is rare also ; Russian is extremely useful. Riga is a three-language city. Most notices and advertisements are in three languages, some in four—Lettish, German, Russian, and Yiddish. Cinema explanations are frequently given in all four, so it takes longer to show a film drama. The use of the various languages is fairly free, but Lettish

is the first and obligatory language in schools. Lettish makes progress at the expense of the other languages. Many books and newspapers appear in it. As nearly every one, however, knows Russian at least as well as his own language, he naturally recurs to its use.

I sit in the gardens drinking my coffee and looking upon a new people who troop by in their thousands, chattering to one another and listening to the music coming from the enormous wooden bandstand. There go the Letts, a democracy, a levelled-up proletariat and bourgeoisie, with no fashions, no pretensions. Officers with their tunic-buttons undone are walking out with full-bosomed Jewesses, and these said officers are the only sign whatever of an upper or ruling class. At the restaurants there is no one giving big tips, no one to whom all the waiters run asking what is your excellency's pleasure. Even Cabinet Ministers wear seedy coats. In the many newspapers no Lett is pictured ; in the many cinemas no Lett is featured as doing anything important.

The great mixture of peoples, instead of adding glitter and variety, as it does, say, in New York, has here made something entirely drab. I could not help reflecting how curious it was that in the regions of mixed nationality in Russia

98 THROUGH THE CORDON SANITAIRE

nationalistic republics had been established, while the purely national centre of Russia had been chosen by Fate for the dire experiment of internationalism. I felt near to Russia's tragedy while in Latvia. On all hands I heard rumours of new famine and distress. An Americanised Lett returning to his country after years in the States told me he found Latvia lifeless. He had thought of transferring his dollars there and starting business. Now the only thing that tempted him was the cognac, of which he had taken enough to compensate him for his enforced sobriety in St. Paul. Then I met a Russian coming from Bolshevik Russia and never intending to go back, and he thought Latvia heaven. "You can breathe here," said he. "There is life, there is happiness."

There in a paragraph you have Latvia's present relationship to the world. It is a poor country, but honest. It is not Western, but it is not Oriental. It is subject to the enormous psychological depression of having Bolshevism next door to it. And miserable refugees still stream into the land. There is a persistent exodus from Russia.

Russians born in Latvia or having Lettish blood can lay claim to Latvian citizenship, and under certain conditions quit Russia to live in the

neighbouring republic. The official figures show that something like a quarter of a million people have availed themselves of this opportunity and come over. To that number must be added many more unknown to official registers. While it is true the Letts are not particularly friendly to the Russians and do all they can to stop the increase in the Russian elements in their population, it has to be remembered that a good deal of their eastern territory is extremely Russian. Russian is the language that is chiefly spoken, and it is not difficult for emigrant workmen and peasants to find work on the farms. In contrast to the state of things in Russia, the 1924 harvest in Latvia was unusually good. Business is beginning to boom there, and there is plenty of money. A million pounds sterling lies in a British bank to the credit of the Latvian Government. A million is a useful means of business argument. The growing trade is reflected in the well-being of the working-class. There are not many beggars ; there is not much unemployment.

There is plenty of communication between the Baltic republics and Soviet Russia. There are sleeping cars to take the rich Reds and the *nepmani* to and fro. One's eyes, however, are taken more by the red goods trucks than by the

passenger accommodation. They are all newly painted. Their smartness almost seems designed for advertisement purposes. The words "nine horses or thirty-six men" have been obliterated. The sickle and the hammer take the place of the eagle. They are the wheat-vans bearing out of Russia the life-force of the peasantry.

Recurrent famine causes refusals at many points of the railway to lade the wheat. Over the stricken areas the peasants are selling their live-stock and abandoning their holdings to seek work in the towns, the trains and the ships are bearing away the grain of the rich districts, thus forestalling distribution. It seems, however, that economic insurgence in Russia gains force and that the organisers of export will have to cease work. Export through Latvia, which had been steady and abundant, came to an end in August 1924. Notable Russian *émigrés* are of opinion that everything ought to be done to help Russia in the famine months of 1925. "We must cry and shout and wave our hands to advertise to the world, and especially to America, the state of Russia," said Count Ignatief to me. "We must not let the people perish." The worst of the famine of 1925 is that, as far as Russia is concerned, it is likely to be repeated in 1926 and

1927 unless the peasants in the better districts can be induced to cultivate their new lands more extensively.

Latvia just now makes rather a pleasant impression on the traveller. It is a well-governed country. The administration is as tolerant as could be expected. There is evidence of culture and of considerable bourgeois happiness. Living is cheap. Latvia was one of the brightest hopes of the U.S.S.R. "Red Latvia" is the name of a Soviet battleship and likewise of a bombing plane. Lettish soldiers did a good deal of the dirty work of the Red army. But we have, nevertheless, in Latvia a growing business State. Its proletariat is of course of a somewhat red complexion, but it hears too much of conditions across the line to be enamoured of joining the alliance of Socialistic republics. And the well-drilled Latvian army, so much in evidence at places like Dvinsk, is chiefly an army for protection against Soviet Russia. The flag of the country, the all-but Bolshevik flag—red with a mere streak of white—might favourably be changed to white with a streak of red.

It is difficult to say whether the Lettish language is a weakness or a strength. Only Letts understand it, and few foreigners will learn it. On the other hand, it does give a black outline

to the features of a new nationalism. The only alternative is Russian.

Formerly all southern Esthonia as well as present Latvia looked to Riga as its centre. Dorpat, for instance, did not look to Reval as it does now. German was the common language uniting Esthonians, Letts, and Germans. Not a few Russians spoke German as freely as their mother-tongue. Notices in German were posted everywhere. Now the German language has gone to the wall. Esthonians and Letts speak their own languages and cease to understand one another. National feelings, rivalries, and even dislikes, are born and grow on each side of a hypothetical frontier. A leading German lawyer, telling me of this, naturally deplored the fact, and made the interesting point that in time to come the Bolsheviks might make use of the new-born rivalries of the Baltic States to play one against the other.

The Letts address you first in their own language—that is a point of honour—then in yours if they know it. Latvian is the exclusive language of time-tables and at railway stations. Therefore, as the names of the places have been changed, one is constantly reduced to :

“Tell me, please, I am a stranger, what is Jelgava in the Russian language?” “Oh, that

is Mitava." "I wish to find the train for Dvinsk. What is Dvinsk called now?" "It is called Daugavpils."

The use of the Russian language has, however, increased. Riga never was so Russian as it is now. The Russian language rolls through the streets and the public gardens. There are, I suppose, several reasons for this. Large numbers of Letts have come from Russia, where they were born or brought up, and they do not know Latvian; Jews prefer to speak Russian rather than Latvian; the Lithuanians cannot make themselves understood in Lithuanian and they turn to Russian; the Esthonians cannot make themselves understood in Esthonian and they turn to Russian. Children learn Latvian in the schools, but their mothers talk Russian to them at home. It will readily be understood that Riga is one of the most mixed cities in Europe. Russian is Riga's Esperanto.

This impression of the strength of the Russian language is confirmed at Dvinsk, which, but for the chatter of jargon in the Jewish bazaars, speaks mostly Russian. But then, of course, in a normally constituted Europe, Latvia would hardly remain in possession of this old Russian city and fortress.

The Dvina winds calmly and gently along its great mounds. The little gold domes of high white Russian churches gleam in the sunlight. It is charming in the evening to walk along the ramparts, watch the boats on the placid river, and listen to the Russian folk-music wafted from them across the water. The bells of the cathedral sound their *vecherny zvon*, their affectionate call to vespers. The evening *gulanie* or promenade commences. The old folk and young children flock to church, lighting their farthing candles before the ikons ; the youths and the flappers go to listen to the band in the gardens and dance the pre-War dances on the wooden way among the trees. The Saturday night *banyas* are exuding steam, and as one passes them one hears the familiar hollow echo of water falling on to stone floors and the swish of loofah and soap on bare bodies.

During the days I was in Dvinsk I felt absolutely within Russia, the Russia of the old days, a provincial town, dull truly, not a place to spend all one's life in, but a pleasant bit of the old country, something torn off and remaining by the side of the road.

I had not been in this part of the world since the autumn of 1914 and the retreat of the Russians

from East Prussia. It is now sown with the Russian dead. Many a gallant soldier lies buried beside this Dvina, dreaming that he is still in Russian soil ; happy in that he died when he did, if he does not know what evil overtook his country. One's mind goes back to the time of the death of the brave boy Oleg—happy little Grand Duke to die a glorious death—*then*.

That is all past. The crosses remain—some of them—their pale wood pointing at all angles as if they had all shuddered at some time.

I walked along the broad glimmering rails at midnight and reflected on what Russia used to be, what great railway-builders the Russians were. There was a grand style about their railway travelling. I picture the Berlin-St. Petersburg express waiting in Dvinsk station—the flocking of the white-aproned porters, the gay scene in the station restaurant, the pleasant people in the carriages ; the rich, the educated, the agricultural. Now no one comes from Berlin *via* Wirballen and Dvinsk any more. It takes twenty-four hours to get from Kovno to Dvinsk. It takes thirty-six hours to get from Kovno to Vilna. Poles and Lithuanians are in a state of war, and a frontier intervenes which no one may cross. For the rest, where formerly one passport *visa* and customs

examination served, you now have a series of them.

After-the-War policy brought the new States into being as a barrier between Germany and Soviet Russia. "A strong Latvia, a strong Poland, etc., is necessary to Europe." That was the formula. The validity of that formula will no doubt pass when the Bolsheviks pass, but not till then. Europe still waits for Russia's recovery.

The obstructions of the time are well symbolised in a novel by General Krasnof, who has put aside the sword for the pen. He predicts a famine in which millions die, and then the complete isolation of Russia behind a wilderness of dead thistles and weeds. Russia is assumed not to exist and the Western world goes on its way. It is a naïve piece of writing, but there are elements of true prophecy in it. The story starts here, on this Latvian line, where some explorers set off from Marienburg and work through to the "Voevodstvo of Pskof". They find a Russia which without our help has solved all her problems and got back to rational living once again.

Meanwhile, however, Latvia feels like Europe and is a credible, creditable place, and over there, across the line, the Tartar rules, the Christians die.

IX

EMPTY BASES OF OLD STATUES

PASSING through the five new republics and Bessarabia, I was greatly struck with the absence of statues. "They are countries with no famous men," I thought. But in that I was mistaken. These are new States—the peoples have their heroes, but the sculptors must not be hurried. They have not had time to immortalise them in stone. There used to be statues in plenty in these countries : statues of Russians, of emperors, statesmen, generals. But they have all been laid low. They have been pulled down and carted away, leaving in every park and square of every town unsightly blocks of stone and strange, empty pedestals.

A German writer once said that it was folly to cast salt into the sea—or statues into the mud. The Germans paid little attention to that writer. They are more prone to statue-raising than most

other nations. Berlin is made painful by bad statues.

Still, if France had taken Berlin in the War, one cannot imagine her wreaking her hate upon the monuments there. With some witty asides, the French would have let them stand. But the young are short of humour, and so it is with the new nations of Europe. They must emphasise their own nationhood by pulling down the foreign statues in their midst.

It was strange in Riga to see, in the midst of the city, in one of the most prominent sites, a great blank block of granite, looking like a "stone of sacrifice". It is not inartistic, a place of prayer for the Letts, an altar in the midst of their capital. There are flower-plots about it. The stranger of the first day makes a mistake and lifts his hat as he comes up to it, thinking it a Cenotaph, or the grave of the unknown Lettish soldier. But no, the block has no present significance. It is merely the base on which once stood an emperor in stone. In the base itself was no offence, and therefore the Letts left it standing there, hoping, no doubt, in time to come, to raise upon it some Lettish hero, their first President, or the General who shall deliver them when at last the Russians fall upon them to re-annex their land to the power of Moscow.

EMPTY BASES OF OLD STATUES 109

In some States, it is true, new statues have begun to appear upon the old pedestals, and I imagine that within a decade these vacant lots upon the field of Fame will all be filled. There is a grave technical difficulty in this, however. Formerly, blocks were made to fit. They were in keeping with the statues above them. Now, the statues must be made in due proportion and design to harmonise with the stone blocks. Already I can see this does not trouble the ministers of Art of the less cultured States, but there is no doubt that posterity will laugh at some of the stone effigies which strive to occupy the vacant air once filled by the great Peter and the no less famous Alexander.

The Baltic Sea, made famous by Peter the Great, honoured the Russian Tsar in all her ports ; but now there is a new Baltic, determined to forget Peter. The statues and monuments are all down, the streets named after Russian heroes are re-named in local languages, even the ports themselves have been re-named. For who recognises the great towns of Tallin, Ventspils, Liepaja, Klaipeda under these names ? Commemorative tablets of Russian victories are erased from church walls, Government offices, and libraries. All that was on high is cast upon the ground ; all

that was low hopes to grow to the high place of honour rendered vacant by revolution.

This new phenomenon in the Baltic is duplicated in Poland and Bessarabia, bearing witness to the abased prestige of Russia. How low she stands to-day — everywhere ! In Kishinef, the capital of Bessarabia, in the pride of place stands a magnificent slab of stone ill-smirched with pitch or tar. I read the half-defaced inscription. On one side it was—*From Grateful Bessarabia* ; on the other were the words—*To Alexander the Blest*. There was a quaint effect in the defacing of the words “grateful Bessarabia”, as if suddenly Bessarabia had become ungrateful. I believe the Government intended to chisel off the words Alexander the Blest and put the name of Woodrow Wilson instead. But seeing that America failed to ratify the Peace Treaty they paused in doubt. I think now it has been decided to place the King and Queen of Roumania upon this slab.

A worse fate overtook the Empress Catherine at Akkerman. She was broken up and distributed to the winds and odours of an ash-and-can dump outside the town. On the pedestal in the public garden some one has planted a cactus or prickly pear, and it thrives exceedingly. The words “Something evil was once here” were chalked

EMPTY BASES OF OLD STATUES III

on the pedestal by a propagandist, rubbed out by the local population, and then scrawled on again.

In Riga and Dvinsk (now Daugavpils) and in all the border cities there are plentiful empty bases of statues, sometimes looking like toadstools, sometimes like the stumps of great trees of stone sawn down and taken away ; the children climb up and down upon them, playing " I'm the King of the Castle ", or striking attitudes. The clever ones who remember the old stone figures cut many funny capers on the pedestals of the displaced heroes. They add thereby to the life and merriment in the parks and the gardens.

Grown-up people, however, look very solemn and serious when asked about these statues. Each has a reasoned defence or an impassioned protest to pour into your ear. They take the matter so seriously that one wonders whether, if the Communists ever got power in England, they would banish Charles the First from Charing Cross, pull Cœur de Lion from his horse beside the House of Lords, heave Nelson from his column, put Gladstone away from the Strand and Disraeli from Parliament Square, leaving behind granite blocks and pedestals where the partisans of the old heroes might go to weep and partisans of the new might mock.

Among the unlikely things in the lap of future time that is most unlikely. At least, it is unlikely that England would turn its back on its own past. Many monuments imply a certain permanence of national life. It is probably a mistake to put up statues in countries greatly subject to revolution. In Mexico almost every statue of the great Diaz has been removed. And in these new countries of Europe, when they begin to people their public places with stone figures placed upon bases formerly occupied by bygone heroes of another race, one can but feel they are putting up effigies to have them knocked down again.



X

IN LITHUANIA

THE southern and eastern frontiers of Lithuania are closed to travellers. Kovno, the capital, now called Kaunas, is therefore in a *cul-de-sac*. In order to go to Poland from Lithuania one must get a transit *visa* from the Letts or the Germans and go through their territory. The frontier is also closed to goods. Lithuania, being self-supporting in food, is perhaps indifferent to the commercial aspect of this mutual blockade. But Poles and Lithuanians are much at odds. Since Poland seized Vilna and the north-eastern corridor the Polish language, and indeed everything Polish,

is taboo. While many business people in Kovno speak Polish excellently, they find it better to speak Russian or Yiddish. Of all the languages of this mixed country Russian gains most by this Polish enmity.

The Lithuanians, however, are less tolerant than Letts and Esthonians. In Kovno no other language but theirs is allowed to be used for public notices or advertisements. So in hotels, restaurants, shops, etc., the foreigner is much in the dark. For Lithuanian, while akin to Lettish, is unlike the rest of European languages, and few learn it nowadays. Many Lithuanians had themselves been at pains to forget it. It is one of the oldest languages in the world, perhaps the mother-tongue of aboriginal Europe. But it had lapsed from the literary domain and become largely the tongue of the primitive peasant. It has been raised from that to the level of European culture, and it grows rapidly. Professors sit in Kovno systematising it and inventing new words.

The clash with the Poles has intensified Lithuanian national feeling. After the freer atmosphere of Latvia one feels an unusual tenseness. This is perhaps comprehensible when one sees how little of civilisation and comfort Lithuania had. Poland, by eliminating the beautiful city of Vilna, not only

deprived her of her "historical capital", but drove her into the fields and the forests. As a set-off against this and some small comfort, Lithuania is able to congratulate herself at the expense of Germany in having cut out a little window on to the Baltic at Memel, which she now calls Klaipeda, and she hopes also to hold for good and all Tilsit and the mouth of the Niemen River. These in the long run might be more useful to her commercially than Vilna, which contains no Lithuanians, and a slice of White Russia which Russia will inevitably attempt to recover from the Poles.

Cobbled Kovno is, I suppose, the worst-looking capital in Europe, but it rises before the eyes into something new. It was formerly a quiet fortress town. The height of houses was regulated in accordance with military requirements and was very low. Its long Nevsky Prospect had the undistinguished lineaments of the Russian provinces. The houses were without water, gas, or electricity; modern drainage had not been inaugurated. Now the Nevsky Prospect has lost its borrowed name; the sky-line is broken by new buildings; large shops exhibit the fashions; luridly lighted theatres compete for the public; there are cafés with newspapers on racks. In the cafés new cutlery, new cups, new chairs and tables, and elaborately new

stencilled walls. In the Hotel Versailles, where I stayed, what a scene of disruption and repair ! Water is going to be laid on, canalisation started ; there is abundant electricity. In the book-shops the booksellers try to spread out sufficient pamphlets in the Lithuanian language to fill out their windows. There is elegant youth on the boulevard. In the public gardens the band plays till two in the morning, and gigantic cinema pictures are thrown upon an open-air screen while lovers walking arm-in-arm along the gravel paths cast glances now and then at the gestures of German cinema queens.

The taxes of Lithuania are now spent in Kovno and not at Petrograd. There is money about. Life is even expensive. This must be said for the Lithuanians : they seem to have effectively stabilised their currency. It is a successful little country, exporting more than it imports and balancing its budget. The goods in the shop windows are marked at double the price that would obtain in Latvia, and considerably higher than in England. Indeed, the standard of prices is nearest to that of America. The influence of America begins to be considerably felt owing to the numbers of visiting Lithuanian-Americans. These boast greatly about America

and the number of dollars they can earn. But dollars turned into lits do not make such an impressive figure in this country of dear goods.

The lit has been up till now a rather dirty piece of paper. One would like to think that national contempt of money was expressed in these shabby notes, many of which looked little better than old tram-tickets. Many shopkeepers refused to accept them when they got torn, so one bought a tube of rubber solution and spent five minutes every evening mending one's money. The Government gained somewhat through the wearing out of currency, but it is a sign of progress that silver coinage and newly printed substantial notes are now taking the place of this old paper.

In the small towns such as Shavli and Poniviezh there appears to be considerable stringency—as if inflation were needed. No one seems to wish to give change. People complain of lack of capital and the difficulty of obtaining credit. The Jews, of whom there are a great number, seem more or less discontented with affairs. It is by no means a Jewish-governed country, though towns such as Shavli are almost entirely in their hands. The Government is strongly Catholic, with Catholic priests sitting in Parliament, and until lately there was one Jewish Minister on

whom devolved the business of looking after the rights of the Jewish minority. What Jews I met were more friendly to Russia than to Lithuania. There are numbers of young educated Jews in Kovno, Jewish dandies in the cafés or walking along the boulevard. Possibly they spoke Polish better than Russian, but that was forbidden. So they speak Russian now openly and even noisily, not a whit ashamed of it.

That certainly annoys the Lithuanians. "Why—I don't understand—should the Jews teach their children Russian and not Lithuanian?" said a young officer to me. We were sitting in the train. "Look at that little boy, he is only about six years old; he is younger than the European peace, but he speaks Russian even better than his mother."

The Jews are sharp enough to see that it is better to belong to a big thing than a small thing.

As a picture of Jewish development I found Shavli very interesting. Here the rule regarding public notices was certainly not in force, and this new town of shanties and barracks, this ramshackle collection of booths and stores, is scrawled from end to end with Yiddish. It is so prominent that one feels to be in an Oriental town. It is one of the nearest approaches to a purely Jewish city I have seen. It has sprung up on the ruins of

what was Shavli. Evidently the agricultural population needed a town there ; it belonged to the economic development of the country. The destruction of war was an accident. The men with the low hats and the long beards were soon on the scene.

The Germans do less business than might have been expected. But they have a close economic relationship, made closer by the shutting of the Polish frontier. The German commercial traveller, with shaved head and shabby handbag, is not an unfamiliar figure. But owing to the Memel affair the Germans are not friendly.

"The Germans look upon us as . . . they are astonished that . . . savages, that is how they think of us, should take part of their land," said a Lithuanian to me.

As regards the Russians, the Lithuanians fear Communism, as do the rest of the Baltic States, for the Red revolutionary element is thought to be fermenting always below the surface. But now, having been cut off from direct contact with Russia, I imagine the Lithuanians to be less concerned with the doings of Moscow. The attacks of parties of Bolsheviks upon Polish territory in the neighbourhood of Vilna and Novogrodek they regard with some complacency.

For they are remarkably hostile in their mood towards the Poles and would not at all regret the humiliation of their enemies from any quarter. Maps printed in Germany show the lost Lithuanian territory marked in big red letters "Von Polen Besetzt". Maps of Lithuania printed in Lithuania show her not only in possession of a handsome portion of White Russia but also half of East Prussia. Maps in this part of the world provide a unique amusement. A map of Europe has just been brought to my notice which shows the historical pretensions of the Poles. It holds all of Lithuania, of course, but also three-quarters of the whole of Central Europe. Dates are printed all over the map, but the names of the countries are omitted. Thus across White Russia is written 1667, across Bessarabia 1396, across the Bukovina 1387, across the Carpathians at Kremnice 999, Prague is marked 1003, Berlin 1037, Stettin 1181, Königsberg 1343, Memel 1657. One would judge that the historical mind of the Poles is likely to prove an important factor in the political life of the Border States.

Military manœuvres in the region south-east of Kovno have lately taken place—defenders *versus* invaders, of course—imaginary Poles breaking across from the neutral zone. I saw a good deal

of the Lithuanian troops, stout fellows singing Lithuanian hymns as they marched, bearing considerable numbers of machine and Lewis guns. The tanks played a great part in the defeat of the imaginary enemy. The military display was impressive. It is remarkable that one old Russian province should be able at will to put 70,000 trained men in the field. Doubtless such an army would be hopelessly outnumbered by Poland and would stand little chance of victory in a new war. But acting in alliance with Germany or Soviet Russia, Lithuania might be capable of winning back her lost ground.

Poland signed the abortive protocol, but Lithuania did not. She has a contempt for the League's conduct up to date, not perhaps unjustifiable, seeing that the League dare not offend the great Powers for the sake of the small ones.

Here, as elsewhere in the Border States, much hard work remains for the League of Nations ; many animosities to be liquidated, much federating work to be accomplished.

Of the four Baltic States I would say the independence of Finland is most assured. The cost of living is greatest in Lithuania and least in Latvia. People are happiest in Esthonia. Latvia, thanks to Riga, gives most sign of having culture.

The Lithuanians are, however, the most ambitious, if not the most fortunate, of these States.

In Lithuania everything is done to magnify Lithuania. Even the trains, it seemed to me, had been slowed down to make you think the country more extensive. You can go on travelling all day and the best part of a night jogging on slowly from Kovno to Griva *en route* for lost Vilna—such was my lot.

XI

THE BALTIC STATES AND RUSSIA

As the members of the Little Entente are banded together by the mutual common interest of defending the territories gained at the expense of Austria, so the Baltic League may be said to have been drawn together by a similar interest in the defence of territory gained at the expense of Russia. Czecho-Slovakia and Serbia are formidable watchdogs in the South ; Finland and Latvia might be as formidable in the North.

Each of the four Baltic States recognises one common great potential enemy, namely, Russia, and they live in the shadow of a great national hostility. For very few Russians, either White or Red, regard their independence and nationhood with any sympathy. The new States came into being not through Russian liberality but through Russian misfortunes. They arose as a result of the exhausting sacrifice of the Russian people in

the War. Germany, with the aid of Communists, defeated and destroyed the Russian State. England and France were powerless to prevent it. But when victory came on the 11th of November 1918, Russia was so tied up by her Communistic leaders that she had not much profit by it. Germany's plan for Russia as an exclusive field for German commercial enterprise did not entirely hold. German-ruled autonomous States did not come into being on the Baltic; White Russia and Ukraina failed to crystallise properly. But nevertheless something of the German program was realised. Germany lost the War, but Russia suffered more. The empire of Germany's eastern rival became badly dismantled. Germany was not entirely pleased with the rise of nationalistic republics on her eastern borders, but she would rather have these Lett-ruled, Finn-ruled, Esti-ruled States, than the old Russia.

Russia herself under the blood-letting rule of Lenin was not at first greatly concerned. More bloodshed and less trade, was her motto; more suffering and less prosperity, less of Russia and more of us. Since Lenin's day, however, a number of less bloodthirsty Bolsheviks have raised their heads, each thinking a little more about trade and prosperity and Russia than the last.

And with this change of direction there has been a growing understanding of the significance of the lost territories.

As the rehabilitation of Russia progresses, so must the danger in which these new States stand. It is a curious paradox in modern civilisation that the continued barbarism of one great country should be directly contributable to social and economic progress in another. Yet nevertheless it is so. Russia's weakness is the strength of the Border States. Moreover, the European sympathy and support which these States enjoy depend largely on the condition of Russia. The worse the politics of Russia, the more help the Baltic States may reckon upon ; but the more Russia improves, the less help and sympathy for the recognised obstructions between Russia and the West.

One may put it briefly in this way. Were Russia completely restored, the Baltic States would have to fight their way unaided and would continue to exist only by virtue of their own intrinsic merit and their banded strength of arms. And unless the League of Nations becomes a much greater power of guarantee than it is now, it would be useless to look toward it to save the unlooked-for national offspring of the Great War.

The League is even capable of turning its back upon the principle of self-determination ; there being obviously too many tribes and small nations in the world for the granting to all of unfettered, unfederated nationhood. If the Baltic States can be proved to belong to the economic unity of Russia, they may be told plainly when the time comes that they have to enter it, and many things are more improbable than a coming United States of Russia, as free and as united as the United States of America, and including Finland, Latvia, Esthonia, and Lithuania, possessing one army, a united diplomatic representation in foreign Courts, no internecine tariff wars, no inter-State passport *visa*-ing, and having, in addition to their own tongues, one common language, Russian.

If this longer view prevailed in Baltic minds, there would be less energy devoted to the teaching of the various national languages, and care would be taken not to lose what knowledge of Russian remained in these countries. The Russian language would then be a compulsory subject in all secondary schools. The common knowledge of Russian in all these countries would make for peace, for more trade and general prosperity, and for a richer culture.

The stress on the tribal language makes for

provincialism, for international difficulties, and for meagre culture. One has but to imagine the Principality of Wales adopting the Welsh national tongue and discouraging the English tongue, to realise a part of the language difficulty. People think in terms of books and poems as much as in words and phrases. The loss to Esthonia and Latvia of Russian culture is as great as if Wales turned her back on English culture and lived for the Bards alone.

But in a smaller way, what a loss even from the pockets of shopkeepers when the commercial travellers from the next-door State cannot explain themselves!

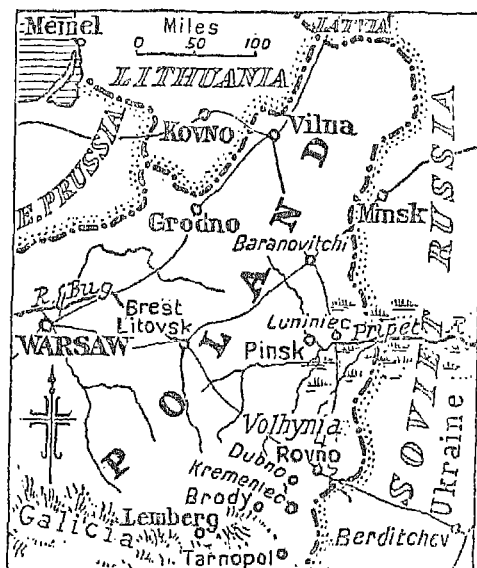
The University of Dorpat is now a great factory of the Esthonian language, and is not of great use to Letts. But the latter, to remedy the defect, have started a factory of the Lettish language at the new University of Riga. To these universities one may add the new Lithuanian University at Kovno (Kaunas). Each new nation is proud of these national institutions. But in so far as they subordinate the great languages of Europe to local and obscure languages they represent a reactionary tendency in Europe. They also make for less local strength. Common language is the greatest bond of union: it ought

not to be overlooked in this part of the world where frontier lines are so faint.

The failure of the League of Nations to realise the Geneva Protocol is a warning of danger ahead in Eastern Europe. Law is to be handed to the strongest. The isolation of Germany grows more formal, less real from day to day. She is recouping her lost strength, and her technical development is remarkable. She inevitably reappears as arbiter of national destiny in the "mixed" regions. Germany at least has not in heart accepted the present map of Europe as the final scheme of things.

Germany has not accepted either the Dantzig situation or the Memel *Putsch*. She will soon be in a position to appear to forget the latter insult and use Lithuania as a pawn. To be a German pawn means to take a share in German commercial prosperity and then to be used for German political purposes.

On the other side of the line, we know that Russia is as little reconciled to the map. Why, then, in the face of such menace, such quarrels as that between Lithuania and Poland, why such incautious nationalism and petty flag-waving?



XII

IN THE POLISH "KRESI" (*The Border Region of Soviet Russia*)

ONE of the most remarkable phenomena in Poland during the time of my journey through the Kresi was the guerrilla warfare on her eastern frontier. A series of attacks upon towns, villages, country houses, passenger trains, police posts, have been made by armed bands of Bolshevists. Scarcely a week passes without an affray of some kind. At first it was thought to be merely banditry, but as

the whole border region, from the ex-Lithuanian territory in the north to Galicia in the south, is involved, it becomes evident that the raids are organised from internal points such as Minsk and Berditchef. Cartridges are distributed to the raiders at the frontier.

There have been a number of incidents capable of kindling war. Add to that, Poland has suffered intolerable diplomatic insults. Several of her representatives have been expelled from Moscow as spies; two members of the Re-evacuation Commission in Petrograd, Dr. Sochananewic and Engineer Stanislawski, have been publicly arrested by the G.P.U. and thrown, without reason, into a hideous prison, robbed, and eventually released without apology. Only humiliating answers have been given to Polish notes and expostulations. The Soviet Ambassador, Obolensky, having been withdrawn, the man who signed the warrant for the execution of the Tsar's family, Voikof, takes his place. The Polish police have discovered widespread Communistic organisations dependent on Moscow. Provisional Soviets have been found in the principal towns of the border regions.

I asked many observers: "How is it that Poland is taking this lying down?" I obtained the same answer from each. Poland begins to

feel that reliance upon France is not enough, especially in the changing atmosphere of Western European politics. Poland will now look more and more to the League of Nations as alone capable of guaranteeing her territory against her hostile neighbours.

Poland, therefore, for the time being, makes no counter-raids upon Soviet territory. By the terms of the Treaty of Riga she is not allowed to have troops within sixty kilometres of the frontier. The task of repelling the invaders has fallen to the armed police, of whom, horse and foot, there are a goodly number. It cannot be said, however, that the latter have much success ; nearly all the Bolsheviks get away. This is due to the fact that they have the advantage of attack, and possess machine-guns, hand-grenades, and abundance of ammunition.

The border region of Russia is called the Kresi, and is some hundreds of miles long. Ethnographically it belongs to Russia, historically possibly to Poland. The greater landowners are Polish, the lesser Russian. The Jews, of whom there are a large number, divide their sympathies. The administration of the country is entirely in Polish hands and is admittedly defective. The Poles themselves are beginning to realise that their

policy in the Kresi has been misdirected, and that the Bolsheviks by their raids hope to raise the flame of discontent.

Luckily the Bolshevik attacks are regarded with apathy. There is not much fear, not much excitement. Hell would be let loose if there were war in the Kresi, but peasant imagination does not see so far.

I was able to make a tour of the whole region. The impression which remains is extremely vivid. There is poverty, discontent, and exasperation everywhere. The Russians are passive, not rebellious. That is not their virtue but their fault. They go under. The most reliable and best educated of the three races in Poland is now being forced into navvying for the other two. I never thought the religion of suffering could go so far or be such a drawback.

Ninety per cent of the Russians are without citizenship, without real passports. They do not know to whom they belong. Birth within the territorial limits of Poland is not enough. Inhabitants of the Kresi must prove their rights. The town of origin of old Russian passport is taken as basis for estimating nationality, but most of these towns are within Soviet Russia, and in such case application for citizenship is refused.

The applicants are considered as either " White Russians " or " Ukrainians " and are given police certificates of habitation. They are not allowed to move from the district where they live without special permission. In this class are to be found families which have been settled in Poland since before the Partition of Poland. On the slightest pretext these people are expelled to Soviet Russia. They are taken in detachments at night and just dropped on U.S.S.R. territory. Sometimes they get through, sometimes they are shot at by frontier guards, but most commonly they are driven back by the Bolsheviks, captured by the Poles, imprisoned, and then on another dark night taken back to the line.

A provision was made for the unfortunate Russians by the League of Nations, and in other border countries many possess the so-called " Nansensky " passport, a passport from the League of Nations. Poland and Uruguay were the only two nations who refused to recognise this passport. I ought to add that these people without rights are nevertheless subject to all the responsibilities of citizenship — military service, taxes, etc.

Almost the whole of the old intelligentsia is without national rights, and remains fixed in

habitation, ineligible for professional or administrative occupation. In the case of Orthodox priests, they are tolerated as long as they lie low, but on the slightest trouble they are removed from their churches and told, "You are not a Pole, therefore you cannot be a priest."

As regards prominent political refugees, they obtain fairly easily a *carte d'asile* from the Government. The ordinary runaways from Russia are either driven back or get a police certificate. In the latter case they have to appear at the police-station every three days, every five days, or every week or month, according to the whim of the local police. The local authority, *miestny vlast*, is much to be reckoned with, often refusing to validate the decisions of its superiors. The hardship of walking sometimes several miles to a police-station and waiting an hour or so there for the application of a rubber stamp is not inconsiderable, especially when the refugee is seeking work.

It is this sort of treatment that causes the present depression and apathy in the Kresi. I was surprised at Vilna. After ten years I hardly recognised the place. It was not that the architecture was different. The churches, albeit with beaten-in golden domes and riven belfries whence


the bells had been taken, were there. There was the same kneeling throng at the Virgin's Gate. But the inhabitants seemed to be changed. War's after-vomit of people is not pleasant. Dirty, down-at-heel, ill-mannered, insignificant-looking people. Culture had gone ; one felt the absence also of all spiritual force. Amid effaced inscriptions and the bases from which statues had been taken away, walked a jaded-looking riff-raff. The price of a bath is five times the price of a meal. The stone pavements repaired with wood, the filthy streets, the smells, form a strange base for one of the most beautiful cities of old Russia.

When one gets out to the country towns, to Molodechna, Baranowicze, Luniniec, the impression of squalor is intensified. There is great scarcity of money. The substitution of gold-based zloti for worthless Polish marks may have helped Warsaw, but in the provinces it has almost caused dislocation. The tills of the shopkeepers are still full of ragged millions, while they thumb ready-reckoners to try and find out what their goods cost in zloti. Goods are priced twice as high as they would be in France, but few have the means of buying them. The whole population needs a new outfit if it could get it.

The farmers complain of the taxes. Your

forest and swamp are taxed like good land. Your horned cattle are taxed ; your dog is taxed. You pay tax when you sell property ; you pay tax when you move. The farmer is made desperate by his taxes. He thinks, moreover, that the object of the Government is to make him sell out. I met a young fellow in the Pinsk district who reckoned his income, when all taxes were paid, to have been two kilograms of bread a day. That was two years ago. This year, owing to failure of crops, it was half a kilogram a day. " On that I must feed and clothe and amuse a wife and five children besides myself. I will put my name down for a factory in France. My father and grandfather had this bit of land, h'm. You want it ? Take it ! The Government offered me a loan at eight per cent with which to pay my taxes. Imagine it ! Eight per cent ! I could save by going to a Jew."

The Polish Government has applied a measure of expropriation to the larger Russian estates, cutting off substantial bits and giving them to Polish colonists with the object of Polonising the country. This seems to be a failure, as these ex-soldier colonists are not attracted by agriculture, and prefer to let their land or mortgage it with the local Jews. Great efforts are, however, being



made to make good the Catholic conquest of the country. Much is open to a Russian if he will change his creed ; he can then become a postman, or a policeman, or a collector of taxes. Catholic churches are a-building. Orthodox ones are being shut ; monasteries and seminaries made into barracks.

Going southward, civilisation seems to pick up a little bit. Pinsk, smashed and blasted by the war, is better than Baranowicze. Upper stories may be gutted, but shops are fitted into the ruins below. It still preserves some beauty derived from the high white churches which, like great candles, stand above the wide waste of the Pripet marshes. Entering the Ukraine, one comes into a warmer, happier atmosphere. Rovno is a lively little city. It swarms with police. Its prison is crowded with unfortunates who are being driven backward and forward between two frontiers. Rovno district has been subject to a series of alarming Bolshevik raids, but the Little Russian is not so apathetic as the Great Russian. He has more belief in Life. So the least unpleasant part of my tour of the Russian border was at Rovno, at Kremeniec swarming with pilgrims going to Pochaeva, at Dubno, and Tarnopol. The last-named is of course in old Austrian territory,

and is allowed to develop Ukrainianism in order to counteract Germanism. There are Little Russian newspapers. Notices are allowed to be posted in Little Russian, and dramatic performances given in that language. Poland hopes, by encouraging the Ukrainian, to weaken both Russian and German influence. In this she is partly mistaken ; for, in the hope of raising the Border, the Ukrainian Bolsheviks are planning and carrying out a series of raids into Galicia, killing the Polish police and issuing propaganda to the peasantry.

The object of the Bolsheviks in all this region is not to make war from without, but to light it up from within. It is a furtherance of the new formula, " No more war ! Hail to the struggle of the classes ! "

XIII

IN A WARSAW NIGHT SHELTER

BEYOND the pale Vistula and the cobbled roadways crowded with the bare-footed poor, stand two wind-blown refuges, facing waste land and the desolation of the outskirts of a Warsaw suburb. One of the refuges is for women only ; the other for women and men, the last resort of poor Russians otherwise homeless.

Here from the doorway and in the passages and up the stairs lie Russians in their rags, passively curled up and sleeping, people who once were, each and every one of them with a strange, sad history of calamity, driven from point to point and pillar to post downward. No one pays anything ; no one has anything to pay.

In the many little rooms there are strange scenes of poverty. I felt ashamed to put my head inside and look on it ; well-fed, well-clothed, staying for my part at a place called the Hôtel de

l'Europe. There was a Hôtel de l'Europe of a different kind. But these down-and-outs were not reproachful. On the contrary, as if starved for human interest in their affairs, they all seemed excitedly pleased to see a stranger and talk to him.

I sat for some time with an old lady who had lost her hearing through being hit on the head with a rifle, the widow of an ex-Cabinet Minister of Russia, once one of the richest people of the Russian Empire, possessed of large estates and a great collection of antiques. She had tramped Russia for two years, and, led by two peasant women, she crossed the Polish line completely destitute, parting with her last bundle to the women who led her across. Now she lies on a truckle-bed beside dim photographs of her ancestors stuck on the wall, and talks of grand duchesses and princesses, and, above all, of the Empress Marie, whom seemingly she knew well.

"We cannot get rid of her," said the overseer. "We keep trying to get her into a convent, or something of the sort, for our funds are low, and one day, no doubt, this place will close and the poor old lady will have no place on earth. Sixty-five years of age, and the awful prospect of the Warsaw streets, to walk and beg, and fall down at last and die."

As a contrast to her I met a number of bright, fresh-faced youths just free from Soviet Russia and now about to start and try their luck in Poland. One had come that day from Moscow, and was full of stories about the shrine of Lenin and all the popular sayings that had sprung up about him. But he had a Soviet passport and was looked on suspiciously. He was perhaps a spy or provocateur. One room at the top of the building was occupied entirely by ex-officers, and hearing of my presence others crowded in till we had, in a stifling atmosphere, a sort of general conversation on Russia and Poland and the topics of the day. One officer had been shaving the head of another and paused with the work half done. There was a Cossack Colonel who asked : " How is Sir George Buchanan ? Ah, ah ! I knew him well."

The Colonel's bed-neighbour was a wild-eyed-looking Captain covered with cement dust. He spoke of the Communist movement in the factories and work-gangs.

" All my mates are Communists, quite friendly to me as a Russian. They assure me they are ready to join in whenever the Bolsheviks make war on Poland."

The man from Moscow seemed very receptive

of this intelligence. If he were really a spy it was the sort of thing he wanted to know.

“ But are they not all very pious Catholics ? ” I asked. “ Catholicism and Communism do not go together.”

The dusty Captain did not seem to think religion counted for much.

“ Don't you think the Bolshevist power is going to last ? ” asked the man from Moscow. “ It's dreadful there ; nothing to eat, no work, no money, but how can the Army be overcome ? ”

“ It will be overcome, it will be overcome. It will itself fall to bits,” cried the down-and-outs, puffing cigarettes which I had handed round, staring at me and preparing to ask me all manner of questions.

But I went on to other rooms, stepping over the sleepers in the passage. The same misery, the same momentary excitement met me.

“ They are like scenes from Gorky's *Lower Depths*,” I said to the overseer, “ but with society people playing the parts.”

XIV

THE DESTRUCTION OF WARSAW CATHEDRAL

I STOOD with a friend one day looking at the great Russian cathedral in the Place Saxe, in Warsaw. The house-breakers were pulling it down. White dust was silting down the grey walls to the ground.

A bad advertisement for religion! Over the bright exterior frescoes of Christ and the Virgin sifted the rubble of destruction. The cross above the dome had been taken down, and the gold stripped from the roofs of the cupolas. From blank doorways and windows one saw furtive glances of surprised saints,—St. Nicholas with raindrops on his cheeks, St. George with mortar on his spear. Only a tiny wooden paling ran round the building. There was no high obscuring hoarding. There was not even the decency in which commonly a private house is destroyed.

“It reminds me of a Bolshevik execution,”

said my friend, "when a man is led out to be shot, and they take away his coat and do not bandage his eyes, do not even turn his face to the wall."

Every day for a long time now the destroyers have been at work. The great Cathedral will be levelled to the ground, the stones carted away, and the church's foundation shall become a drill square for soldiers.

"That is what the place used to be before Poland was partitioned," say the Poles. "The Russians took the finest site in our city and put up their cathedral there. It was a calculated offence to our national pride. Now that we have our day once more we will remove it."

During the war it was used by the Germans as a garrison church. After the war the Poles used it as a Catholic church, brought in an organ, a holy-water stoup, and rows of chairs, and erected a Roman altar. It used to be full of worshippers of a Sunday—as I saw it in 1922. But one obtained an unpleasant impression of one sect having stolen the church of another. Refined but formal Romanism was nowise at home in the colourful, emotional atmosphere of Byzantianism. The Government and the Church therefore took counsel together as to how they might be rid of

the temple. They decided that it was not the house of God, but merely the house of a "cult." It was given out that it had never been consecrated, and sentence of destruction was pronounced against it.

Most of the denizens of Warsaw — Poles, English, French, Italians, Jews, Lithuanians, Bolshevik Russians—approve the destruction of the cathedral. They are there consenting unto its death. It pleases some. They look forward to the military parades which they will witness there between the Saxon Gardens and the Hôtel de l'Europe. Every day there is even now a cramped parade. The Polish National Anthem is played, and woe betide any man who does not take off his hat. I saw a young Russian watching the men in the cage-like skeleton of the dome of the cathedral. He got too absorbed to notice the military band, remained with his hat on during the Anthem, and was pounced upon by a soldier who, with many buffets, drove him through the crowd to the presence of the mounted police-officer at the corner of the Predmestie.

You may destroy the house of God, in full view, without apology, but you must not omit to raise your hat in honour of Poland. Poland is in truth more important than Poland's God. If God

serves Poland He will be honoured, if not He will be dishonoured.

I often wandered in the evening and at night round the cathedral, whence the workmen had gone. I never saw it look more beautiful—though it always was a more than usually beautiful temple. How well the Russians built it ! It does not give easily to the pick and the hammer ; the stone is good. It did not look dead last autumn ; perhaps by now it has the tragedy and ghoulishness of a corpse, but it looked then like Christ on the Cross before the ninth hour had come—innocent, majestic in suffering, pathetic in denial. The stars missed the glittering crown of the glory of the church, missed the cross of gold, saw the shadow of the cross of wood. I wish I could convey how like a human body seemed the gaunt and pale grey walls of the church, and then, if one had eyes, how like one Body. The Place Saxe became a Golgotha.

“ Ah, you are a Russophile,” said a Catholic to me indulgently. “ You are sorry that the cathedral is being pulled down.”

“ I was sorry when the Germans were destroying the cathedral at Rheims ; were not you ? ”

It struck me that this public destruction of Warsaw Cathedral was supremely irreverent. It

might be patriotic or justifiable, but a tragic spectacle to be performed in the chief place of a chief city. It is not a blow at the Russian Church and the defenceless Russia ; it is a blow at God. It is difficult to see how the Poles can legitimately reproach the Bolsheviki with converting churches into cinemas and music-halls while they themselves before all men's eyes are destroying a house of God in order that they may have yet another parading ground for their army.

XV

A WOMAN'S FLIGHT FROM RUSSIA

ROVNO is in southern Poland, thirty miles from Soviet Russia. I was there one night, and seeing that the cathedral in the midst of the town was all lighted up I went inside. A wedding of two Russians was being solemnised, and it lasted an hour and a half. Two tall men held crowns above the bridegroom and the bride while they with bent heads supported a large Bible upon their brows, the priest holding it with one hand and reading the appropriate gospels. I liked the fine old face of the priest and all his movements ; so when the service was over, about ten o'clock, I followed him to his house in the cathedral close.

This was Father Nicholas Rogalsky, a wise and gentle personality—to use his own words—not only priest but, as it were, consul and lawyer and adviser and friend for all sorts who come to him for help.

I think he had the true Russian faith that everything is arranged by God, and he therefore accepted a tiresome visitor, late as it was, gladly and freely.

"Perhaps you can help," said he with inspiration. "I have a lady here just out of prison. You know Z——, ah, well, his niece. She escaped from Soviet Russia; tramped through the big Shepatovka forest, was robbed on the frontier, but got here and came to me. Within an hour of her arrival she was arrested. She was twenty-four days in the administrative prison, and we have just managed, with God's help, to get her out. Her trouble now is to get a passport to go to Serbia, where her husband, an ex-officer of the Guards, is earning a living by lumbering."

He went out and called her. There came into the room a young woman, scantily dressed, looking like a frightened bird that has come out of the night and in at the window of a home. The priest left us and she told me her story.

She became separated from her husband in 1919. He was on Denikin's staff. With the White Army he retired to Novorossisk, and later, with Wrangel, retired to Constantinople. Then he was transferred to Serbia. She remained with her child in the capital and, thanks to a false passport,

was unmolested. Got work as a clerk at six chervontsi a month. Lived on hope. Then her little girl took scarlet fever and died. There was nothing to hold her in Russia. She felt terribly lonely and decided to run for it. So she sold all she had and realised all that was laid away, and with a hundred-dollar note next her person set off for the South, got out two stations before the frontier, and bravely struck out westward for Poland. She entered a great forest and all went well till the second night, when she met a man in sheepskins with a gun on his back. He called two others, and they robbed her of all she possessed.

“ It was a terrible ordeal for me as a woman. They pointed to a bush and made me take off everything. They took away the note I had tied round my waist. They tore out the lining of my cloak. They took my blouse, my undergarments. It might have been worse. I have to thank God they did not destroy me. They gave me back my skirt and the lining of my cloak and told me I could go. ‘ Who are you ? ’ I asked. ‘ We are the forest chiefs ’ (*lesnie atamani*), they said.

“ No one else attacked me. I lived on apples for a while, but was obliged to go into villages for

bread. The peasants all recognised an escapee, gave me food, told me which way to go to avoid the police, to escape being asked questions. So late one night I got into Rovno. I could not think to whom to go. So I went to the cathedral, came here. How thankful I was ! I had some food. I had a bath, and had just got to bed when the police arrived. I put on the skirt and the lining again and they took me away."

"You must have wept," said I.

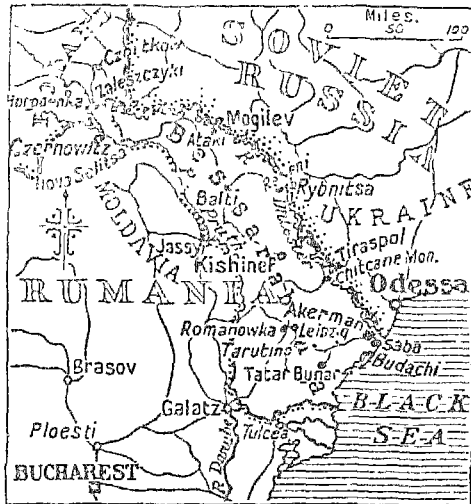
"I wept, oh yes, I was in despair. Twenty-four days I was in that prison with a crowd of other Russians, all starving. Many had been back and forth several times on the Russian frontier. One old woman, Anysia, over sixty years old, has been seven times taken to the frontier at night and left there, and come back again."

What an impression of heroism and misery ! The strange frightened bird sat on the divan and was silent. Then the priest rejoined us. He had that faith in God which repels all pessimism. He knew no reproach, praised the Poles for their kindness, and with a mild, radiant look calmed the woman, who had got excited and freshly alarmed by the telling of her story.

The upshot was I stayed a day longer in Rovno

152 THROUGH THE CORDON SANTTAIRE

than I had intended and wrote a letter to the Serbian Government. Incidentally we paid a visit to the prison in the muddy street behind the town and took a loaf of bread and some meat for the unfortunate Anyisia.



XVI

THROUGH BESSARABIA

I

I ACCOMPLISHED the first part of my journey through Bessarabia unobserved. At Kishinef, however, on my last day there, I was discovered and was placed "under the protection of the Government", which meant that for the rest of the way, wherever I went, I was accompanied by a Rumanian officer. Thus I was able to obtain two points of view, that of the governed and also that of the governors.

I endeavoured to make my exit from Poland *via* Czortkow and Zaleszczyki, but found that frontier shut. So I spent the day in a rickety phaeton driving along the shore of the Dniester. The high banks of the river were a soft violet and green ; the fields of Southern Galicia were covered with big brown pumpkins over which hung the golden heads of innumerable sunflowers. There were huge white stone crosses at the corners of the road, and antique Orthodox churches in the villages. The Ruthenian population all understood Russian, a fine-looking peasantry, apparently very pious.

I crossed the Dniester in a tub at Horodenka and proceeded to the Bukovina, where it proved to be easy to cross the frontier—practically no formalities. In an unlighted Rumanian train I went to the Pruth. Scarcely any trains are lighted at night. Rumania is too poor, or some one steals the candles. We crossed the Pruth by a dangerous, creaking wooden bridge, all the passengers looking out at the windows and half expecting the structure to give way. Rumania has not yet been able to replace the bridges destroyed during the War. She is too poor, or some one is diverting the money to another use.

I arrived at Czernowitz, now Cernauti, late at night and found an hotel of the once-was-fine

variety. Czernowitz, a four-language city, is a sadly shabby remnant of Austrian culture, otherwise gay, alive with cafés, painted ladies, and jazz bands. The fire-watchman on the top of the old town-hall blows a sort of robbers' whistle every quarter of an hour all night long to show that all is well and he is not asleep.

I met one Briton in this place, the only one, a redoubtable Scot buying Bessarabian eggs from the Jews of Novo Selitsa. He found me at the hotel and drove me to the Archbishop's palace, perhaps the finest building in present Rumania. I was surprised that it had not been looted.

From Czernowitz I returned to the Dniester region. Novo Selitsa is some two hours distant by train, and is the northern gate to Bessarabia, a squalid town half Jewish and for the rest mostly Ukrainian. The Moldavian element began to increase. I began to see the Rumanian frontier guards dressed in every rag of every nation, with rifles of various types and times. I made the acquaintance of the police and gendarmerie. It may be said at once that they are very much less efficient and therefore very much less formidable than those in Poland. They are by nature more easy-going, and then they are paid next to nothing. They can be bribed.

The money in Bessarabia is incredibly filthy. But no one dare refuse a note, no matter how dirty and torn, if the numbers are on it. Dirty money is withdrawn in Bucharest and apparently sent to Bessarabia. Luckily I obtained a number of clean notes in Czernowitz and put them by for tips and bribes. There proved to be something fearfully fascinating about a new banknote in Bessarabia.

The Government, it is said, has ceased printing money. There is a shortage of money of any kind, and a great economic crisis. Banks have stopped credits. Few new goods are bought; little of the old is sold. Firms cannot get money to pay their employees. Peasants cannot find markets for their harvesting. The great cry, of course, all the time is for a foreign loan.

The Bolshevists are forcing Rumania to keep a large army in the field, and Rumania feels that she cannot afford it. At the same time she does not wish to fight. She wants to hold what she has but not fight for it. It is a difficult situation.

The Dniester as it flows between Rumania and Russia is at all times peaceful and beautiful, but dead as regards trade, disaccustomed to barges and steamers. Its bridges are all smashed. Soldiers with loaded rifles face one another, and even upon

occasion call out to one another at points where the river is narrow :

“ Come over here ; we'll give you grapes ! ”

“ No, come over to us ; we'll give you bread ! ”

Some of the broken bridges are a great sight to see, especially that of Tighina, where the main-line railway to Odessa plunges into the water, a mighty yellow-green bridge with lower way for trains and upper story for horse traffic, a living symbol of the destruction of modern civilisation. As a dramatic detail, curiously enough, there remains a wrecked waggon on the rails at the Rumanian edge of the bridge.

One wonders how long this dead river Dniester is going to be a feature of post-War Europe. If universal revolution is going to take place, of course it does not much matter, but if business and common sense and the old way of life are to prevail, the Dniester must be disenchanted and set free again. It depends more on Bolshevik than on Rumanian politics. Only one conciliatory voice seems to have been raised as yet, and that is Krassin's. He is openly in favour of peace with Rumania, reckoning their wheat more valuable than their possible Communism. Rakovsky is the champion of the opposite view.

I watched the peasants working in Soviet

Russia. How deceptively peaceful Russia looked, with its red-roofed cottages and white towers nestling in the green. One could see the peasant carts driving along the lanes to the village market-place. One heard no church bells, however, and the church domes seemed despoiled of their gold and their crosses. Over one dome in Tiraspol I descried the Red Flag flying. I visited the monastery of Chitcane, now Rumanianised, all the monks Moldavians, the church service conducted in Rumanian. Slavonic has now been abolished in all churches in Rumania. Here, as elsewhere, soldiery is quartered, and in the height of the belfry there is a shake-down bed, and two sentries take it in turn day and night to watch the Russians.

In Northern Bessarabia there are not so many attacks of Bolshevists as on the Polish line. The river seems to be a hindrance. But a Moldavian republic has been proclaimed by the Reds, in the hope of uniting the peoples on both sides of the Dniester in a Sovietic satellite State. Several armed bands have been sent over from Odessa. Communist agents are said to be at work everywhere, both North and South, buying men for the coming revolution. They count upon the general discontent in the country to help them to their

end. There has been much ferment even among Rumanian-speaking people. The expropriation of the land and its subsequent distribution among the peasants was a judicious if harsh measure. But it has not entirely appeased the peasantry, who found life easier under the Russians than they do under the Rumanians. Rumania is short of capable administrators. She has a few of Western European type, but they have to be reinforced by dark heavy men from the South, often brutal and corrupt. The typical Moldavian belongs in temperament more to Russia than to the Balkans. If the Moldavians are restless, the Bessarabian Russians are more so. For everything characteristically Russian is under a ban. War is being waged against Russian culture. The old libraries are shut. No Russian books from Berlin or Paris or Prague are allowed to be imported. None are printed. Russian drama is not allowed. Films depicting Russian life are often banned. The Russian newspapers are more or less terrorised by censorship, and are obliged to fill out space by long accounts of irrelevant matters, thus—"How Mahon met his end." "Was Vaquier innocent?"

Russian refugees from across the Dniester when caught are brought before a tribunal of Bolshevists

and Rumanians, and if proved to be Russian they are sent back to Russia to be shot or imprisoned. But those who hate Rumanian rule most are the poor Jews, and they for the most part are quite ready for a Moldavian republic affiliated to Moscow. The worst of it is, few realise what a blood bath Bessarabia might become as a Moldavian republic. It is better to be ruled by Rumania than by the Bolshevists.

Considerable changes in the status of towns begin to be apparent. The Jewish trading points on the Dniester are in decay, and the Jews go inward seeking better business. Ataki, opposite Mogilev but disconnected from it; Reseni, opposite Rybnitsa; Tighina, opposite Tiraspol; Cetatea Alba, opposite Odessa, are stilled in economic death. Other places, however, such as Balti, formerly Bicltsi, are expanding rapidly and are destined to become great towns. You can obtain a clean room in an hotel in Balti, because new hotels are being built. It is a wild place, swarming with soldiers, ragged Jews, and Moldavian peasants, with any number of cabs and horse-trucks plunging through the dust of the uneven streets. Sunflower seed is the foundation of its prosperity. Incidentally it seems to be the chief military centre for the control of Northern Bessarabia.

Kishinef, or Chisinau, as we must now spell it, is still a large city. Of Jews alone it has over 100,000. It is commercially half dead, and its masses are greatly impoverished. It is very dirty, and the pavements are full of holes. Very little money is spent on upkeep. There are no elections, and here, as elsewhere, the great Liberal party which governs Rumania places its nominees where it will. I found the Russians frightened and rather suspicious of me. One Jewish editor thought I had been sent by the Prefect to find out his real opinions. The local Press, however, regarded my arrival as an auspicious event and gave me a dinner.

Thus it was that I came to be known. The military commander of the forces in Bessarabia, General J. Rudeano, asked me to lunch with him at headquarters. The company there seemed rather apprehensive when I told them I spoke Russian. But I said I had seen too much in the other Border States to be specially shocked by Bessarabia. The General, a genial and, indeed, very delightful personality, gave me his views on the situation, and promised to take me on the morrow to a fortress on the Dniester. We travelled in a special carriage, and had lunch at the fortress with the officers of the garrison.

After that, we walked the battlements and watched the Soviet soldiers through our field-glasses.

I was to have returned to Kishinef ; but that was not in my plan. So the General handed me over to the local Prefect of police and the Colonel of the garrison. Between them they were very attentive. I met the ex-War Minister of the first temporary Moldavian republic, a Kerensky-like type, M. Pantea. His brother keeps the station restaurant at Basarabesca, and thrives as much as the ex-War Minister, who is now only Vice-President of Parliament. I had the whole land situation expounded to me by a man who claimed to have been the chief inspirer of the agrarian law. But it is very simple. They took the land away from the landowners, all except six dessiatines each, and distributed it. They promised something in exchange, but gave next to nothing. "I get enough to buy a dinner once half a year," said one to me. English, French, and Italian landowners are being recompensed rather better. The German colonists, however, have almost all received complete restitution. A notable exception, the latter, amply justified by the loyalty of the said Germans to the present Rumanian regime.

Production, however, has sadly diminished as the result of breaking up the large estates. This

is largely due to the poverty and lack of enterprise of the peasantry, who cannot buy manures or machinery. They farm to support themselves ; the large farmers farmed for export—that makes a difference.

II

I had many amusing adventures while “ under the protection of the Government ”. I was interviewed by a Rumanian journalist, who printed in his paper the opposite of what I had said. In specially black type he made me say that I found every one happy and prosperous under Rumanian rule, every one speaking Rumanian, and that I was sorry to see so many Russian newspapers in a country whose national tongue was obviously Rumanian. I was angry when I saw it, but incidentally it proved useful to me. I kept it as an additional passport in case of danger of arrest, saying always, “ This is mostly untrue and very tendentious, but it is what one of your editors wrote about me.”

I drove with an ex-Russian Colonel to the old Dragomirof laager, where a Russian division was always stationed for four months of the year, now in complete ruin. We visited several widespread villages, rank with the vegetation of the Dniester

River. It is very rich and quiet, but malarial country. It was extremely hot, even in late September, and the mosquitoes were a danger. The Russian was a Bessarabian born, did most of his service in the Russian Army in Siberia, did not know Rumanian but learned it in three months and obtained a certificate of proficiency in the language, became a Rumanian subject, and entered the military service—a career impossible for a Russian in Poland.

I found many ex-Russian officers. Indeed, my next escort was a brave Russian captain who fought through the whole of the War and had hidden his decorations and wound-marks. It was perhaps a cruel question, but I was to a certain extent his prisoner. I said to him: "What did you do with your Russian sword?"

He seemed to start at the question, but answered quietly enough that it had worn out through continual friction against his horse. He took me to Basarabesca, where I was passed on to the commandant of the station. He was a Transylvanian, speaking German and Hungarian better than anything else. His style was entirely German. He showed me the German settlements of Leipzig, Romanowka, and Tarutino. At this last we spent a day. He shared my room at the Gasthaus. The

officers detailed to accompany me were not apparently given their expenses. So they had to make the best of the situation, as I had no superfluity of money.

Tarutino is a finely built village with broad streets, white-walled yards, and big barns. Its Germans all speak Russian. They were, however, ill-treated by the Russians at the outbreak of the Great War and deprived of their lands even while they were in the Russian Army, fighting for the protection of Russia. Their sympathies then were more with Russia than Germany. They were also excellent farmers, deeply rooted in the soil, having possessed it for a hundred years. Curiously enough, Rumania has been prudent where Russia was hasty and has restored the land to the German colonists. (There were 100,000 of them in Southern Bessarabia.) The law of expropriation has not been made to apply to them, and I talked to Germans who possessed a hundred instead of the statutory six dessiatines of land. As a result of this policy the Germans are stout Rumanian patriots, and during the recent Bolshevik attacks on Tatar Bunar and the neighbouring country they made up a volunteer band three hundred strong and set out to repel the invaders themselves.

Tarutino is several miles from a military station, and on the night we arrived the end of the string of carts and phaetons bringing passengers from the train was attacked by Russian bandits. I felt rather sorry not to have been in one of the carts held up. But there were two or three wounded, and the robbers lifted thirteen thousand lei. One was captured. He was thoroughly flogged, but refused to give the names of his companions.

I should have been arrested in this place but for my escort. The magistrate, an unpleasant-looking fellow, sent officers of the gendarmerie to bring me before him, but they had no power to say anything to my officer, who was extremely laconic. We played a game of chess in a café while a gendarme with rifle and bayonet stood at the table, waiting, afraid to go back without me. Nothing came of it; the Prefect seemed rude, but I was "under the protection of the Government" and looked out of the window while he harangued me.

Eventually he cut it short and bolted from our presence to stop a group of whining gipsies just making their escape from under arrest.

I went on to Akkerman, now Cetatea Alba, the White Fortress. My escort had been called

back to Basarabesca station, a most important railway junction where there are all sorts of happenings and many arrests. He was commandant there and much needed. He wired, however, to the commander of the fortress at Akkerman the time of my arrival there. But I had a characteristically tiring experience at the station.

The train arrived at 11.30 P.M. There was an inspection of the documents of all the passengers, superintended by armed police. It lasted till 1 A.M. No officer appeared to meet me. My passport was taken from me, and I was told to come and claim it next day at the central police station. I refused to part with it. The agents of police were very rude, as is their wont, but I made such a stir that they thought it better to telephone for instructions. Meanwhile the last cab disappeared, and the station lights went out. At two in the morning we walked a mile or so, and I carried my own bag while a police agent escorted me to an hotel. I was put into a room, which was, of course, dirty. But when every one had gone and I tried my door, I found it did not open from the inside. I had to ring for the maid every time I wished to make an exit. At three in the morning I had just fallen asleep when there

was a knocking at the door, and a half-dressed Jewish lad put his head in and told me some one had come to see me. I put on my dressing-gown and went to the door. A young officer drew himself up and saluted.

“ The Colonel of the garrison has put me at your disposal,” said he. “ During the time you are here I am at your service for everything.”

This was the prelude to much jovial hospitality on the part of the Rumanians, who gave me a very good time, trying, of course, to keep me from learning anything about general conditions. But with one who has not only ears and eyes but also a nose, that is not quite practicable. I learned all I needed to know about the state of affairs.

There is considerable disaffection, and there is a corresponding state of alarm. The Rumanians are not a militarist people ; but they are not capable of performing the most difficult piece of administration in Eastern Europe. It may frankly be said that England herself could not govern a place like Bessarabia. If there were no Bolsheviks on the other side of the Dniester ; if Rakovsky were not Rumania's sworn enemy or not as influential as his London success has made him ; if there were not the inferiority complex of the herded Jews — there are many ifs—

then Rumania might make a success of her new territory.

I went over to the coast, approaching the district where the recent disturbance took place. I was at Saba the morning of a discovery of hidden ammunition. I learned of the burning of the portraits of the King and Queen at Tatar Bunar, and the proclamation in many villages of the Soviet Republic of Moldavia. I drove through endless vineyards, to Swiss and German and Bulgar and Russian villages : I will say this, that the Black Sea looked superb, a vast, glimmering, sunlit loveliness, so different from the cold, gloomy Baltic, whence I had started my tour of the line. Budachi, whence I had my first full view of the sea, is a supremely beautiful spot. I stood on the cliffs talking to the bare-footed and patched but ragged soldiers on guard, and I looked down to the many naked people sun-bathing on the shore below, then across the sand-line to Bugaz and the approaches of Odessa, and then out to the incredibly lovely sea. It was a wonderful moment for me. Rumanians tell me that all the world is going to come to Budachi and the neighbouring resorts for the mud-baths. Perhaps also it will come there for its beauty and its grapes and its wine.

III

My last day in Bessarabia was spent at Cetatea Alba, where the Rumanians showed me full hand of hospitality, and gave me a gay send-off on my way to Bucharest, Paris, and London. The town was plastered with advertisements of a film version of *Tarass Bulba* not to be performed. Censored. The Russian classic was considered too dangerous. Public music had also been forbidden for several weeks. The bandstand in the public gardens looked as if it would never be used again. The cactus growing on the pedestal where the statue of the Empress Catherine used to stand dominated the scene.

I sat at a table on the pavement in front of a café with some officers and some ladies. "This is not Rumania," said Colonel N. to me in confidence. "More like Morocco. I'm sick of it. Nothing but alarms. I hope we'll be transferred soon."

"Why don't you have some music?" I ventured.

He meditated a moment, and turned to a subaltern and whispered something.

"You'd like to have some music," said he. "The regimental band shall play for you to-morrow morning at ten."

"For you, for you only," said the young sub. next morning.

And at ten, to the astonishment of the inhabitants, the band of the 35th Regiment took possession of the bandstand.

" 'Tipperary' will be played first, and following that only English music," said the "sub".

I demurred: "Let them play what they like." I insisted on a free programme. The Colonel joined us. A sleepy-looking public crept in and listened. The conductor evidently had certain sympathies. After "Tipperary" he gave us a Georgian national air in honour of the uprising. Then a Russian folk-song and dance. When that was played the public all began to clap. Some of the Rumanians looked annoyed.

"They little know," said the Colonel, "that they owe it all to you."

The Censor, a sprightly young fellow, a Turk, came up to us. "*Tarass Bulba* will be played to-night. We have changed our minds and given permission," said he. "You'll go, of course."

"What a pity!" said I. "I'm leaving by the afternoon train. But please don't stop it. Let the Russians have it."

"Come," said the Colonel, when the music had ceased. "Let us drink some . . ."

He led us back to the café, where there was a flagon of prune gin and a number of black olives on toothpicks on a table.

He introduced me to the Member of Parliament for South Bessarabia (Cetatea Alba), Dr. Sufflery—not an elected member; it is not yet safe to have elections in these parts. The Deputy proved to be an extremely jolly fellow, the Colonel and he drinking from the same glass, and he invited us to lunch. He gave orders for a collation in a restaurant some streets off. While waiting he put on what may be called the Rumanian national gramophone record—a line of talk about happy, contented Bessarabia, joyous landed peasantry, brave soldiers, Communistic gold, Jews, valorous German colonists, love of England, need of British capital, not so fond of France, etc., etc.

I made some well-chosen remarks. We repaired to the Restaurant Dianu and sat down with a garrison Colonel and some other officers. Cognac, muscatel, and champagne flowed freely. There was enough food to feed the garrison.

I am naturally abstemious, and I have inherited a cool head; but had I stayed for the night with the Deputy, as he wished, I must either have got drunk or offended mine host, an unpleasant

dilemma. After the second bottle of champagne the company seemed unusually exhilarated. We talked endless nonsense in French. "You will stay the night, you cannot refuse ; there is martial law here, and the Colonel has commanded it. I will take you to my villa at Saba and give you some thirteen-year-old Madeira. But stay. You have already missed the train. You are our prisoner."

"Ah," said I, "what marvellous skies you have in Bessarabia! What a dream was the Black Sea as I saw it yesterday from Budachi! Have your swallows already gone?"

In the midst of this, after one of the officers had proposed the toast, "Rumania and England for ever," the young subaltern, a devoted Anglo-phile, asked me did I love Rumania.

"She is very interesting," said I.

That seemed sufficient.

The Member of Parliament ordered two fowls, five fish, and three bottles of muscatel to be wrapped up for me. The Colonel ordered a carriage to come to the restaurant. My bag was put in it. We all drove to the station.

"You will have a cabin all to yourself all the way to Bucharest," said the Deputy.

He got into the train, and we came to a locked

carriage marked, "Reserved for Members of Parliament only." Into that went the fish and the fowls and the wine and my bag.

However, somebody else's luggage was already there.

"How's this?" said the M.P. "Clear out his things. Fetch the *chef de gare*. Where is the conductor? Take these things out; this carriage is to be kept locked." Then to me: "You can let in whom you will, and keep out any one you like; that's your privilege."

This was partly for my comfort and partly to keep me from accidental conversation with the civilian population—the speakers of the Russian language.

The station-master, with waxed moustaches, dilated eyes, and speechless lips, seemed much worried. The passenger could not be found.

It was not till the train moved out that a gentleman in shabby clothes came quietly in and sat opposite to me. He was the chief working engineer of the railway—a Russian.

A last word is, however, due to the Rumanians: they may have more on their hands than they can manage, but they are a hospitable people, and I thank them. All the Border States consider themselves ramparts between Europe and bar-

barism. I could wish the position in Bessarabia were stronger. The most obvious thing that would strengthen it would be a more liberal and efficient administration, not so much of the Balkans in the *Seguranza*, a little more friendliness and confidence in the treatment of the minority populations. People like General Rudeano and Dr. Sufflery are types of good Europeans who would do well in France or Italy, but lack a reputable background for their activities.

IV
THE RUSSIA IN FRANCE

I

CONVERSATIONS WITH RUSSIAN WRITERS

I. KUPRIN

I CALLED on Kuprin in Paris, for besides having edited a volume of his tales in translation I have a lively admiration of him as a writer. Like so many thousands before the revolution, I bought his works as they appeared and read them avidly. Suitably bound in unfading green, they are treasures of my bookshelf. His tales are very characteristic of the former life of his country, as humorous as Tchekof, and more detailed, more social. Now he is orphaned of his readers; he is little printed except in the pages of *La Gazette Russe*; people steadily advertise for his works. It is a strange phenomenon: a writer as popular in Russia as Wells is here, and receiving formerly as large a return, a merchant prince of the literary

world, and now a man without a country, and a writer without readers.

I found him to be a most cheery exile, nevertheless. He lives on the outskirts of Paris in that Auteuil neighbourhood which harbours so many Russian writers and artists. He is fifty-four years old, rather younger than his years, broad-faced, bright-eyed, and as conversational as some of those talkative characters in his stories. He stepped right out of a Kuprin tale. He told me some of his adventures in the revolution.

"I retreated out of Russia with the army of General Judenitch," said he; "though why I should call it 'of General Judenitch' I don't know, for we never saw anything of him, and I don't believe he ever joined it. I had to leave my villa at Gatchina—it was on the road of the armies. There was a moment when we could have marched into Petrograd, but we missed it. We had no general behind us. The panic-stricken army pelted into Narva, where we starved and froze and died. And I have never been back to Gatchina. But what I left there! Autographed books and manuscripts, precious pictures, photographs! I had every book I loved bound specially in the way I thought fitted it. I have not heard of what happened to the villa

from that day to this. I only brought one thing with me. What do you think it was ? ”

I could not guess. Kuprin looked at me impressively. “ My most sacred possession,” said he,—“ a portrait of Tolstoy signed by him.”

“ What has happened to your works in Russia ? ”

“ Oh, they spit at me ; they can’t bear me.”

“ But do they not print your works and sell them ? ”

“ No, only some of my earlier tales which were against the Government ; they print them and distribute them as propaganda. I am very sorry. If I ever wrote against my country, I was wrong. Do you know, I have come to the conclusion that one should never write anything that shows one’s country in a bad light. No genius ever writes ill of his country. Look at Kipling, for instance ! Ah, how admirable ! Even Tolstoy—I mean Tolstoy the artist, before his mind was obsessed by ethical philosophy—he never really wrote ill of his people. I dare say that in the English army you come across the vice which I described as existent in the Russian army in ‘ The Duel ’. But Kipling would not have mentioned it. I did. It was true, but I was wrong.”

He spoke of his great and lasting admiration of Rudyard Kipling. He had always marvelled

at Kipling's Indian tales and his extraordinary gift of transporting the reader to the scene of his stories. "Even in Russian translation, even though I had never seen India, I felt as if I were living in that country when reading Kipling. Of course, not exactly a friend of Russia, but all the same I wish I knew him, wish I had met him when I was in England in my young days."

Long ago he once spent a few weeks in London. He loved the horse-troughs with human drinking-fountain above and place for dogs to drink below, uniting horse and man and dog. "Oh, that is charming!" said he. He liked to watch families riding in Hyde Park, "with even a little pony for the little child". Children and animals have a large territory in Kuprin's mind.

He confessed to a great belief in Great Britain. "You test everything by experience; you make many tests and then you come to a decision. You know more about the Bolsheviks now than they do in France, although France has been more hostile to them. I believe you have found them out. But France has to go through a great deal before she learns the lesson. She does not learn through other nations' experience. England turning the cold shoulder to the Communists is a

terrible blow to Moscow. For England sets a fashion in the world. In any case I think the Bolshevik power is crumbling. There is no genius there. The peasants thought the revolution was just a quarrel between the *barin* and the Jew; but they have found out what the Communists are, and they are massed against them."

We spoke of a Russian writer, a friend of Trotsky, who had lately been in London. Kuprin was much interested. "What does he say of him?" he asked. I spoke of Trotsky's cold nature, his negative magnetism, his inability to give any one his confidence. This was Boris Pilniak's account of Trotsky.

"But how does he cut bread?" asked Kuprin. "What exactly does he look like? how does he raise his glass to drink? how does he hold himself when he walks? what do women say of him? These are the sort of questions I should ask. They mean more than pose and oratory."

We discussed literature again over a bottle of wine. Kuprin spoke of his admiration for O. Henry. "O. Henry is on a small scale compared with Kipling, but very clever." He said he thought Bunin one of the greatest of living Russian writers. He thought Ivan Lukash, now

much read in Berlin editions, very talented, though admittedly difficult to translate. As regards Soviet Russia, it seemed to be producing no literature worth the name. There was enormous matter for writing, human material without end. But conditions seemed to be such that nothing was written, or if it were written it did not come to light. Not knowing English, he did not see much of current literature in England and America, but Bernard Shaw's article on Zinovief in the *Daily Herald* had appeared in extract in the Russian newspaper of Paris, and it enchanted him. It had seemed incredible that "this great mind" could remain on the side of the Bolsheviks, but now he had turned on them and made them look fools in the eyes of the world. They for their part were smarting with rage and would never forgive him. Kuprin had been so much interested in the matter that he wrote an enthusiastic article on Shaw for the *Russkaya Gazeta*.

"That is my rôle just now—journalism," he said in parting, perhaps a little sadly. "I do not write many stories."

Nevertheless I learned that a small volume of new tales by him is shortly appearing in Prague, and he promised to give me a copy in return for a poem of Kipling's if I would send it. The poem

he wanted was the one which tells of the Russian revolution :

Was ever kingdom turned so soon to ashes, blood and earth ?
'Twixt the summer and the snow, seeding-time and frost.

2. IVAN BUNIN

Probably the only Russian writer who has gained in prestige during the seven years of revolution is Ivan Bunin. He was never popular, but he has gained the suffrage of his fellow-writers. He is a writer's writer. He is known in England by *The Village* and *The Gentleman from San Francisco*, and here also his appeal is somewhat limited. When I called on him in Paris recently I found an American trying to discover whether he had any sensational matter which he could take to New York and publish. But Bunin, while reasonably ambitious to see more of his work in English, reminded him carefully that he only wrote for the few. "You will never see people reading my books in railway carriages," said he.

Bunin belongs to a somewhat radical tradition in literature. Revolutionary Russia would have been glad to possess him, and I suppose, had the revolution been decent and democratic, Bunin would never have fled from it. But Bolshevik Russia has no more uncompromising opponent in

the world of literature and art than he. His resistance has gained him the reputation of being bitter. But that is a mistake. He is a gentle, sympathetic man with an engaging, sing-song voice. He talks of Russia with humour, with a lively wit, and smiles and coaxes to gain you to his opinion.

Artsibashef, whom I met in Warsaw last autumn, is more the embittered type. He had all the bourgeois world at his feet in 1917. But Bunin never had literary glory and is nearer fame now than then. His attitude toward the Bolsheviks, therefore, has no bias derived merely from loss of readers.

Bunin is a bright-faced, slightly built man of middle years ; he looks as if he had lived with the moujiks a good deal and has a reflection of the provincial in his face, the village *feldscher* perhaps. He left Russia in 1918 while it was still not difficult to get away, passing through the German lines to Odessa. Thence he made his way to Paris, where he has been living for some years. He has no intention of returning until there is a change of regime.

"Practically the whole balance of Russian artistic and cultural life is now abroad," said he. "Of those writers who have remained behind, the

most substantial are those who made their names before the War. There is the novelist Andrey Biely ; there is Anna Akhmatova, but she belongs more to us than to them. Alexey Tolstoy left us, and he truly is a man of talent though of weak character."

In Bunin's opinion Alexey Tolstoy left Paris because he could raise no more money there. He liked to live in a broad way. But there was no means of earning the money he would spend. His friends were generous to him, but there came a time when they turned pale when they saw him, knowing that it would mean " Lend me a hundred francs till Friday ". " Having fleeced us all in his care-free way, he came to the conclusion that Moscow offered more, and he went over to the enemy. To what state he has sunk may be judged by last summer's scandal. The Soviet asked him for a play, and he handed them a version of Capek's *R.U.R.* which was duly played as his own, though under a different title.

" Most of the young Bolshevik writers go in for the ultra-natural style, neo-realism they call it. It is a brutal product of the time, horrible and foul. Pilniak, for instance—he was among us before the revolution. I knew him. He stayed with the Bolsheviks, went with the time. He

goes in for this ultra-naturalism—looks on famine, bloodshed, typhus, bestiality, describes the most distressing and dreadful scenes on the Volga in the famine area, and feels nothing himself. He knows what the people have gone through, but condones it, gets famous on it.”

“ But they say that drama makes progress under Lunacharsky,” I urged.

“ What sort of progress ? Not one single play has come out of Russia since the revolution. The Theatre of Art carries on with its old repertoire edited and censored by the Bolsheviks. Those in power have no taste for drama, do not understand anything that is really worth while. You find the Chekists instructing the Theatre of Art to do them a version of *La Fille de Madame Angot*. Is there anything new in that ? ”

“ What do you think of the excuse commonly given by writers in Soviet Russia, that they feel they must remain in their country if they are to continue writing ? ” I asked.

“ That’s a fine old-fashioned excuse,” said Bunin. “ Did Alexey Tolstoy need to go and look at Russia again in order to refresh his memory ? Do I need to go and look at the Russian peasant again to know what he is like and what is in him ? One can write as well in exile as at home. Think

of Victor Hugo, or of Ovid, or again of our great Turgenief wandering over Western Europe nearly all his creative life ! ”

I thought of Dostoieffsky's quarrel with Turgenief in this matter, and his “ Are you sure you can see us as well from Berlin ? May I not send you a telescope so that you can see Russia better ? ” But I did not say it. It is a matter on which there can be two opinions. Certainly it should refresh the eyes of a Russian artist to see his Russia again, even in her misery, even in her despair. But Bunin is one of the literary political champions of the great “ Emigration ”. He triumphantly expects the disintegration of Bolshevism and will not take half a step to break its fall. He is for the complete disassociation of Russian artists and writers from the Soviet power. He considers that the present rulers of Russia have destroyed even the minimum of liberty, have suffocated all creative thought, science, and literature ; and having maimed art, go in now for artistic stunts solely for purposes of political agitation. And that being so, he considers it a crime against the real Russia to co-operate with the Bolsheviks in any way. He believes that a strong Conservative government of some kind will eventually take the place of the present tyranny : it may be a monarchy, it may be

a strong government of another kind, but the unity of the old Russia will be re-established, the emigrants will return, and the present rulers will be swept away. In Bunin one sees an uncompromising critic of the revolution and an unqualified believer in the coming restoration.

"But how is it that in England there are so many sympathisers with Bolshevism?" he asked at parting. "It seems so strange in a wise, clear-sighted people like the English."

"You see," said I, "we had in England before the revolution a strong propaganda against Tsarism. Darkest Russia was preached by the Kropotkins, Stepniaks, and the rest. Half England still believes that Russia was foully and hideously governed under the Tsar, and that it was impossible to live happily there."

"How untrue that is," said Bunin in his deprecating sing-song voice.

"You see we have a new set of visitors to Soviet Russia just now, and they do not find it so dreadful as the old picture we had of pogroms and prisons and knouts. They come back and report progress."

I could see a reproachful look in the novelist's eyes as I left him. He is right, of course. Russia was a happy place in the old days. But I cannot

but reflect how the Russian writers of pre-revolution days lent themselves to that foreign hate of Russia which has now come and devoured them all.

Bunin's latest book, a collection of stories and poems, has just been published in Berlin, and is entitled *The Rose of Jericho*.

3. ALEXEY REMIZOF

The opinions of Alexey Remizof served as a useful corrective to those of Bunin. He lived with the Bolsheviki until 1921, serving in their Theatrical Department in Petrograd, and knows them more intimately. Although he fled to Berlin and then to Paris, he is quite willing to admit that there are some interesting writers in Soviet Russia. He does not think that the Communists have succeeded in destroying the national spiritual life of Russia within her borders, does not indeed think that that is possible.

Remizof is one of the few undoubted geniuses of modern Russia. If he is little known abroad it is because his most characteristic work is almost impossible to translate. Early in 1914 I wrote in the *Times Literary Supplement* about his fairy-tales, and received several invitations from

publishers to arrange for publication in London, but no translator could be found. He is a folklorist in fiction, but not only that, he tells the stories of the Russian peasantry in a language which belongs to the depths of the forests, to the lips of peasant children, and to the completely un-Westernised, un-modernised tongue of tramps and pilgrims.

Though possessing most of his books, being a great admirer of them, I had never met him, and he certainly never heard of me, but I resolved to call on him in Paris, and I had a delightful experience. Hardly had I rung his door-bell when the door opened, a dark little man appeared and said to me, "Come right in." He did not ask my name or business; he seemed to have been expecting me. He touched me gently on the shoulder as I passed into his studio, and when he sat down in front of me I could almost believe he was some sort of Puss-in-boots rather than a man. He seemed to hold his little curving body together with his shoulders, he wore black-rimmed, circular glasses on his comical face, and a tuft of black hair curled friskily above his wedge-shaped forehead—a model for his own character, *Kot Kotovitch*—Cat, the Son of a Cat.

The studio was a curious place, cluttered up

with books, ornamented with maps, strewn with toys, but chiefly remarkable in my eyes for the stout threads hung across and across overhead, and hanging with completely cleaned white fish-bones of soles, bits of seaweed, ducks' feet, imitation starfish, bubbles and baubles.

On his couch was a white pillow, and on the pillow lay resting a man-doll with long lichen-coloured moustache. By and by Remizof introduced me to him as Okol-Svort, the only toy he brought with him from Russia. The Okol-Svort is so called because he walks round and round after the witch in the forest, watching what she is doing. Remizof picked him up and laid him on his shoulder and stroked him. "He is very tender, very caressing," said he meditatively.

I wondered at the fish-bones hanging above our heads, but Remizof said he liked to feel at the bottom of the ocean when he wrote, and one would have to relate this fantastic decoration to a popular book of his, called *K Moriu Okeanu*, "To the Sea Ocean". That and *Posolon* are his own two favourite books.

"It is all so dark in the world, but there is a light of fairyland, a strange wonderful light," said he. "That is what people need in their lives."

A sort of sadness overspread his face as he talked about his books. "The Russians in Paris and Berlin don't understand me. They ask me what my writing is about. It's worse still with the Bolsheviks, the Commissars. But the peasants understand. I can read any of these tales to them and they are quite happy. It's so difficult to get my work printed in Russian now. I stayed too long with the Bolsheviks. The Brass Horseman Company (the largest publishers in the Russian language to-day) look on me askance. My newest book, *The Blow of the Sorceress*, is being published in German and in French translation, but cannot find a Russian publisher."

There was a quaint look of distress on his face, a very whimsical look. "The exiles do not understand peasant Russian," said he. "It is far from them."

I asked him what he thought of the new jargon employed by the Bolsheviks. Was the Russian language in danger of being spoiled by it? He said, "No. This jargon belongs to official reports, Commissars' speeches, and the Bolshevik newspapers, but it makes no progress in the country as a whole. The language is with the peasantry, who, now as always, speak a wonderful Russian." In literature there has been a return to peasant

Russian. Therein lies the success of Boris Pilniak, considered as Remizof's greatest disciple. He has gone back to this natural root language of the race.

" You admire him ? " I asked.

Remizof's face lighted up with happiness, and he at once began to imitate the rich, sonorous voice of Pilniak.

" Isn't he a Bolshevik ? " I asked.

" Not he. But he, first of all writers, has caught the characteristics of the life under the Soviets, and put them on paper. Nikitin also has done something, though he is not so serious over it. But this return to the language of the peasants is the new movement in Russian literature which cannot progress farther along academic Western lines. Turgenief led us astray. Many Russian writers, for example Bunin, belong to the Turgenief school, and assume that Russian is a Western language, facile and fluent like French."

Remizof has also written a novel of life under the Soviets. It bears the eerie title of *Russia with Her Hair on End*, and tells a story which begins in 1917 and ends with the establishment of the N.E.P. It has appeared serially in a Russian newspaper, but I believe it is Remizof's intention

to re-write the end of it and carry the narration to the day of Lenin's death.

He had on his table a copy of *The Clock* in English translation. "One of my very early works," said he regretfully. "I had forgotten I had written it." He seemed, however, greatly pleased with the prospect of a new book of his appearing in English. It is called *The Fifth Plague*, and an English poet in Belgrade is doing it, with the help of M. Annitchkof, a Russian literary friend.

"It is simply incredibly difficult to translate," said Remizof. "I am so glad Annitchkof is there. He knows a good deal."

I understand that Remizof's next work will relate to the folk-lore of Carpathian Russia. He has received a large quantity of material from there. "Extraordinary," said he. "Wonderful stories, and closely akin to the Ukrainian folk-lore, though more original. It is the real source of Gogol's fairy-tales."

Such a book would easily find a publisher in Prague. I thought, however, it would be necessary to go to the Carpathians to do it. Remizof loves the country, and above all, the South land. He seemed a sad, strange prisoner on the Avenue Mozart, one placed behind bars, yet having committed no crime.

I was about to take my leave of him and go, when he said, "Wait a moment, let me introduce you to my wife." He opened a door and I saw into another room. There in a blaze of light were two Christmas-trees ornamented with tinsel, and beside them, like a figure in a fairy-tale, stood a tremendous doll-like lady, stout, pink-cheeked, bright-eyed, like a fairy godmother or some such character out of a fairy-tale. A string crossed the ceiling of this room, and from it hung dried plants and shrubs.

"That divides the room into two rooms," said Alexey. "On this side you may smoke, but not on that."

"That is your church!"

There was a large figure of the Holy Virgin there, and such a "holy corner" as one sees in peasants' houses, with candles saved from Easter on the shelf below, lamp burning, various "consecrated" toys and household things.

He picked up a powder-box and opened the lid. "What do you think we have here?" he asked affectionately.

"Russian earth," said he with great solemnity. "We brought it with us."

"Ah, Boris Pilniak wept when he called on us in Berlin and saw that box, and another writer

crossed himself, but what will you do ? ” asked Rémizof, peering into my face watchfully.

I was silent, and smiled. I hope he understood.

4. MEREZHKOVSKY AND HIPPIUS

The Bolsheviks made Gorky their Dictator of art and literature. They had Merezhkovsky in their midst, a man of real authority, but they knew better than to offer the post to him. They preferred to honour one of themselves. Nevertheless, between Tolstoy and our day I suppose Merezhkovsky to be the most substantial figure in Russian literature. He is the dean of Russian letters, and one of the most respected men, not only among his own people but in Europe generally. Scholar, artist, thinker, he has been a man of great and manifold activity, notable in his latter years as a publicist, but famous in Europe for his *Leonardo da Vinci* and *Julian the Apostate* ; famous in Russia for his powerful historical plays and religious and national essays.

He and his wife, “Hippius”, who is also a poet and playwright, remained in Petrograd through the stormy years 1914-1919. Living within sight of the Taurus Palace and the Duma, they witnessed, as it were, from a little window, the tragedy of the

revolution. "We followed the course of events by minutes," wrote Hippius, "for we lived by the railings of the park on the first floor of the last house in one of the streets leading to the palace. Six years—six ages—I looked out from that window, or from the balcony. . . . I watched the old palace die after it had been resurrected in new life. I saw the city die. Yes, the whole city built by Peter, sung by Pushkin; dear, severe, and dreadful city—it died. The last record in my diary was the pitiful story of its agony."

Merezhkovsky is a short, vivid, alert man in the sixties. His face is pale, his eyes deep-set, but he does not bear the marks of the revolution in his body, which seems youthful. His mind has what seemed to me a boyish excitability. It fires rapidly like trains of powder. His wife is much younger, with a wreathed glory of copper-glinting hair above an open countenance. Hippius has, however, a slightly troubled expression, as if for some reason she had been constantly called upon to revise her previous opinions of men and things. She has always lived for and in the life of other human beings, whereas her husband, for the most part, has been in the realm of ideas and abstractions.

I spent a pleasant evening with them in Paris,

where they live very simply in a third-floor flat on the Avenue Bonnet, his own old Paris apartment preserved since before the War. Some philanthropist must pay the rent for the other literary celebrities in Paris. None of them seem to me to have more than the barest means of sustenance. Their literary income must be derived from the sale of foreign rights, and one knows what meagre sums that affords. Hippius, however, had had her play *The Green Ring* performed by the Neighbourhood Players in New York, and Merezhkovsky places his new books in Germany and France as they come out. He seemed rather chagrined because he had not found a publisher for his new book on Tutankhamen either in England or America. This volume is called *The Birth of the Gods*, and it has lately appeared in Paris.

I asked Merezhkovsky what he thought of the future, but I found him pessimistic, not believing that Bolshevism would soon come to an end. "It was what many thinkers feared," said he, "Dostoieffsky when he wrote *Demons*; Solovyof when he wrote of the end of history. You have made a tour of the Soviet frontier, but where is that frontier? It is not simply geographical—it is in the human soul. The religious expression

of the Orient is becoming negative. The Devil has a power (Merezhkovsky called it Antichrist), which is still mobilising and concentrating. Perhaps we shall not live to see its ultimate defeat."

The Russian philosopher has the virtue of talking like a book. I recognised the Merezhkovsky style, so familiar in the old days in the *Russkoe Slovo* in his essays directed against Gorky and in defence of Dostoieffsky's ideas.

The danger in his method of prophecy is the tendency to fit in human history to a pre-ordained plan. It is safer to modify one's theories of human destiny by deductions from current events. There is an incalculability in life which has ever baffled science and falsified prophecy. Eternity, moreover, is painfully undramatic—or at least, appears so to mortals who think of life as a five-act play.

One of Merezhkovsky's ideas is that the Bolshevik and the Burzhui are close akin; the one is the other turned inside out. By Burzhui he means the European business man in general, and he ventured the opinion that there was a secret sympathy between the two. "Always, when Bolshevism is on the brink of the precipice, a hand is stretched out to save it, and that hand is a business hand. The world, therefore, can only be saved by a third party—what one might call

Christian mankind." In Russia especially he expects liberation from the peasantry, though if the peasantry fail us he reckons that the days of Europe's civilisation are numbered. Europe began to be through Christianity, and when Christianity goes our Europe must go with it.

We had some argument about this. For I hold that the British business man, at least, does not correspond to the "Burzhui". He may be at times prosaic and narrow, but in general he is honest and kind, is possessed of a practical common sense, and is on the side of life and human happiness throughout the world. Even should Europe with its mixed nations, go to bits, the Anglo-Saxon world is likely to remain.

Concerning this, it was clear that Merezhkovsky had some doubt. He has an immense respect for England and America.

It seemed to me that there were two Merezhkovskys : one a Cassandra warning the Trojans, and another a Trojan ignoring Cassandra. When he stepped down from his place of prophecy he was an engaging, enthusiastic, fighting man ; hoping for victories, deploring accidents, sorrowing over disillusion. "Is Borah a Jew?" he asked.

"You must not think that all our enemies are Jews," Hippius reminded him.

" Senator Borah is the friend of all the afflicted," said I.

" He is the champion of the Negroes and the Indians, is he not ? " said Merezhkovsky.

" And he includes the Bolsheviks in the number of the afflicted. Oh, how stupid ! "

We talked of Zinovief.

" O God, give him health ! " cried the philosopher, firing up with ironic enthusiasm. " He is our best friend. I'd be sorry if he got killed."

It is somewhat amusing that no other Bolshevik is doing so much as Zinovief to consolidate foreign opposition to Bolshevism.

It is easy, however, to be mistaken in the estimation of the significance of men. Savenkof was an old friend of Merezhkovsky and his wife—" And he left us carrying into Soviet Russia twelve trunks of the archives of counter-revolution ". Kerensky also was in pre-revolution days a welcome guest in their home. It has been necessary to revise many opinions regarding Kerensky. They tell of him now injecting morphia in the days of his super-excitement, the first revolution. To Mme. Merezhkovsky he is simply a nice boy who went wrong. But both she and her husband recognise in him one of the chief instruments of the destruction of Russia.

That he and Vladimir Lvov together ruined General Kornilof is the chief unforgivable sin.

Merezhkovsky himself came under a cloud, after he fled from Petrograd and starvation. For he believed ardently in the Messianic destiny of Poland, and believed that in 1920 Poland might become the Liberator of Russia, a belief which also had to be revised. Poland is to-day despised or hated by most Russians. Few believe that any good to Russia could ever come through Poland.

I said I thought I should see the day when all the exiles would go back and Russia would be restored, and that opinion, naïve no doubt, nevertheless shed a sort of light in a sad room in Paris—where despite all pessimism and grand theories of further suffering there was the simple human hope that after all, something would happen to-morrow, next week, this year, to change all for the better. *Morgen wieder lustig !*

It was only when he began to check his daily hopes and fears by his own great knowledge of history and by his formulated plan of the future, that Merezhkovsky's ardent personality seemed to pass under a sombre cloud. He often becomes silent, and broods—on all that has been ; on all that yet must be.

II

THE SITUATION IN PARIS

M. HERRIOT, the Mayor of Lyons, if not a strong man, was a professed idealist. The business head of a great industrial city, bourgeois of the bourgeois, with the keys of Lyons in his hands, he was called on to lead revolutionary France. Perhaps one ought not to say so much as that : the Bloc des Gauches is not exactly revolutionary ; it is a union of the elements of the Left in French politics. Mr. Lloyd George went so far as to hail M. Herriot's electoral success in May 1924 as a great Liberal triumph. As the Liberals had turned out Poincaré in France, so they would in due course turn out MacDonald in England. But with such a backing of Socialists as M. Herriot had, he could hardly be regarded as a political general of Liberals. M. Herriot has proved to be remarkably akin to MacDonald politically. His triumph was a triumph of the Second International.

Old acquaintances, the two Prime Ministers quickly got into accord. Despite MacDonald's persistent and deep-seated pro-Germanism and M. Herriot's genuine Francophilism, they somehow hit it off. MacDonald coaxed Herriot and Herriot coaxed MacDonald at the London Conference, with eminently satisfactory results. The British Premier learned that he could not sacrifice France to a prejudice ; the French Premier learned that the dislocation of European business was not even good business for France. They *compromised*.

But while they talked amicably of the German problem, MacDonald in his engaging way kept putting in a word for the Bolsheviks. " See what we have done," he urged. " We have recognised them. We have signed a treaty with them. We are going to grant them extensive credits. If John Bull, the king of the business world, will go so far, will you, France, let yourself be left behind ? "

He imposed his sentiments upon M. Herriot ; he almost kidnapped the Frenchman's mind. Clearly, MacDonald was not so much a friend to Herriot as a clever uncle. " Go into the cave into which I already have adventured," said he, " and fill your pockets with the gems you will find there."

Having gained Herriot's consent to recognition of Soviet Russia, MacDonald evidently persuaded him to time it so as to help in the British elections. Just at the critical moment Herriot was to come forth and recognise Soviet Russia. The British electorate was balancing the question of the Bolshevik Treaty. Many people would naturally say, "If France, who has lost so much in Russia, is resolved to start afresh with a clean sheet, then we must have done a wise thing."

Herriot did come forth and grant full, unconditional recognition. Fate, however, played a nasty trick: the bad impression of the Zinovief letter drowned the good impression of French recognition. The British Labour Party and its Treaty were routed at the polls, and a new Conservative Government rejected the treaty with ignominy. Herriot had in a way gone further than we had; he had granted the Bolsheviks the full privilege of an Ambassador. Rakovsky in London was only a *Chargé d'Affaires*. Krassin came to Paris a full-blown Ambassador. Herriot was left high and dry with a doubtful experiment on his hands.

The Russian Communists said to him: "You shall give us a loan first and a treaty afterwards." They behaved with great impertinence, and they

used the backing of the many French Communists and all the more extreme men in the Union des Gauches. Herriot responded but weakly. He allowed Krassin the freehold of the old Embassy on the Rue de Grenelle, whereas the Bolsheviki only got a lease of Chesham House. He encouraged Moscow to think that the old Black Sea fleet anchored at Bizerta would be handed over—this to the consternation of Rumania, who feared an armed descent upon the coast of Bessarabia, and to a similar dismay in the Baltic States, who feared equally a descent upon their shores from Kronstadt and Leningrad. Both Rumania and the Baltic group of nations made representations to France on the matter. Perhaps it ought at once to be said that Wrangel's ships had long since become unseaworthy, and their addition to any nation's fleet could only be regarded as a jest. Had they been of any use to France it is highly likely that France would have taken them to herself in part compensation for her heavy financial losses in Russia. At M. Herriot's invitation Bolshevik experts arrived in North Africa to take over this collection of old iron. As a matter simply of honour the French naval officer in charge at Bizerta refused to allow the Bolsheviki to take over, and the French

Government was obliged to withdraw him from his post. The behaviour of the admiral was, however, popular in France, and served to help turn public opinion against the Government. Herriot began to repent. He then found that whereas the Russian Embassy in Paris was handed over with all its valuable plate and furniture intact, the French Embassy in Petrograd was entirely looted. The seals of the French Embassy were still intact, but Zinoviev had had the very fine furniture removed by the windows, generally to the homes of his women friends.

The Russian *émigrés* in Paris have been warmly the friends of France, but judge their dismay when the French Government allowed M. Krassin to think that it would lend itself to the persecution and political control of the Russian refugees in France. There arose the question of the possession of the Russian banks and of the Russian church. M. Herriot was seen to be abetting a violent Communist offensive in Paris.

In the midst of the pursual of this policy, the secret instructions of Moscow to the French Communist Party were made public. Circular No. 128 showed an elaborate plan of campaign for another revolution in France and the grossest

disloyalty of the Bolsheviks to their apparent friends, Herriot and his Government.

The publication of Circular No. 128 made an impression similar to that made by the publication of the Zinovief letter in England, and it had the same repercussion in Herriot's mind as the latter had in MacDonald's. He was for the moment very angry with the Communists. He went so far as to give special police instructions for the routing out of agitators. A hundred or so Communistic agents were arrested and conducted to the frontier—none of them, be it said, Russians.

This, however, brought the whole of the French Press into full cry against Herriot. The Conservative ones seemed to catch at a new inspiration. But those which are Liberal and Radical attacked him also. *Humanité*, the chief Press platform of the French Reds, proclaimed that Circular No. 128, like the Zinovief letter, was entirely a fabrication. It deplored the Government persecution. The *Libertaire*, the Anarchist daily, deplored sadly that it was not their way. Nothing could ever be effected by force. The *Liberté*, with its dashing writers, derided the persecution of the Communists as entirely ineffectual and almost a joke.

It seemed certain that M. Herriot would be forced to resign, Briand or Painlevé being named as probable successor. M. Blum, however, the experienced leader of the Socialists, at the party congress at Grenoble persuaded the discontented spirits that their only possible Prime Minister was Herriot. They must pursue their *politique de soutien*, otherwise power might revert to the old Bloc National and M. Poincaré. In April 1925 Herriot fell on what seemed a purely financial issue; Painlevé took his place, but without intention of change of policy toward Russia. The political expectations of the Russian exiles were therefore disappointed.

"France has much to learn," said one of them to me. "She will now begin to explore the possibilities of agreements with Soviet Russia from the very beginning, having learned nothing by the previous experiences of England and Germany. But we know that Soviet Russia has absolutely nothing to give France, no material benefit, and no prospect of it."

Meanwhile, the effects of French recognition are being sharply felt by the Russian exiles themselves. It caused all over Europe a crystallisation of the "emigration"—by which I mean, the fluid became rigid: no Russian could leave the country

in which he was located without the use of considerable influence at the passport bureaux. The status of the *émigrés* became suddenly undetermined. For once the U.S.S.R. becomes generally recognised, the position of the Russians who are *sans état* becomes extremely enigmatical. The agents of Moscow, moreover, evidently hope to profit by the situation. The Russians in Paris were greatly perturbed by the appearance in their midst of spies from the camp of their mortal enemies, Chkhists on their doorsteps, so to speak. Their first alarm was the statement that they would be forced to give up their League of Nations passports and become Bolshevik subjects. Their second alarm was that their church on the Rue Daru would be confiscated. No shrewder blow could be struck against them than by taking away from them their spiritual stronghold.

On the first St. Nicholas Day after the recognition of Soviet power by France, the Russian church in Paris presented a marvellous spectacle, crowded from the gilded screens and frescoed walls to the very gates with an emotionalised Russian congregation singing *Eternal Memory* for the murdered Tsar. The Imperial family slaughtered at Ekaterinburg have entered the shadow-land of old ikon faces ; they have become

mythical and legendary, and therefore, for the Slav, more real.

Strange developments are possible in Paris. There are signs that the new Bolsheviks there will be forced by circumstances to devote more attention to fighting the "White" Russians than to gaining French political and financial support. They encourage the Young Communists of France, the *Komsomoltsi*, they aid and abet all French extremists and revolutionaries, but their main efforts are to be directed to defeat the Russian exiles. It will, however, be strange if France remains content to allow Paris to be the battlefield of conflicting factions of Russians. Not for that at least was recognition granted. France, moreover, has her own grave political problem inherent in her financial difficulty and the inability of successive governments to raise the taxes necessary to meet her national liabilities. There is even a danger of revolution resulting from this deadlock—a local and national revolution. It is nowise to her advantage to have in her midst world-firebrands capable of using the opportunity to aggravate a disaster to the Republic and make it a disaster to France.

III

THE POSITION OF THE RUSSIAN CHURCH IN PARIS

As the church in Paris is a common rallying-ground for Russians of various political persuasions, it will be understood how valuable it is to the *émigrés* from a national as well as from a spiritual point of view ; they would feel desperate if they lost it. The difficulty of the situation lies in the fact that the church has generally been understood as an Embassy church, and M. Maklakof, when he handed the old Embassy over to the representatives of the Soviet, handed the right to the church also.

I had an interview with M. Maklakof, who had remained Ambassador of the old regime until M. Herriot by recognising the Soviet power gave him his *congé*. He is an urbane, polished Russian, brother of the Minister of the same name, a diplomat by temperament, but I should not say

a man of driving power capable of original action. He relinquished his rights with characteristic Slav passivity, and he has been much criticised in that when surrendering the Embassy on the Rue de Grenelle he tacitly surrendered the church with it.

Possessed of some treasure still, he was able to remove his shadow Embassy to commodious premises on the Rue Boissiere, but the church and its congregation were left to look after themselves as best they might. The Bolsheviks at once claimed the church as their property, and a fight ensued.

How Moscow would dispose of the church, if it had it, is difficult to foresee. Some think it would be closed for a while and then reopened as a Communist establishment; others believe that one of the bishops of the so-called "Living Church" would be sent from Moscow to take it over and confound the faithful. But as a Russian Communist in Paris is always altogether a non-believer, it is difficult to see how even the "Living Church" could carry on there. The most likely *dénouement* is that it would remain a long while closed.

There was consternation for a time. It was believed that the Bolsheviks might make a raid

on the church and seize it. There were watchers set to give alarm in case that might happen. But happily the French courts granted an injunction against the Bolsheviks, pending litigation. The legality of the present ownership will be contested by the representatives of the U.S.S.R. The issue seems to be considerably complicated and may take a year or so to settle.

Alexander II. gave 200,000 francs for the building of this church ; the Holy Synod gave a further 200,000 francs, and a sum of 600,000 francs was collected popularly. This was in 1857-59. M. Boris Tatistchef, whom I interviewed, claimed that none of the million francs thus subscribed was " State money ". In January 1921 the Embassy was forced, through lack of funds, to cease payments for upkeep. Since then the church has been entirely self-supporting. In 1922 it was legalised as the domicile of a cult, according to French law. What has to be established in the French courts is not so much the right of possession as the right of use.

Meanwhile the *émigrés* have successfully begun a counter-attack. Proper facilities for the education of priests are denied in Russia, and the faculty of Divinity has in general been shut up. There is a danger that the Russian church may

suffer for lack of new priests to fill the places of those who die. A seminary, therefore, is to be established in Paris for the education of a new generation of clergy. A site has been acquired for this purpose, and also a provisional place of worship, in case the church on the Rue Daru should fall into Bolshevik hands.

'The church is not rich.' M. Tatistchef could put down in its name some 40,000 francs for this new work, and it made an appeal for funds. A suitable site on the Rue Crimée was offered for sale at 300,000 francs. The 40,000 was given as deposit, and in a very short while the 300,000 francs was subscribed. In fact, the new site has been bought and M. Tatistchef has some 90,000 francs in hand for carrying on the necessary work.

I paid a visit to this remote but rather salubrious district of Paris, and saw the premises. What has come into the possession of the Russians is an old German church, school, and clergy-house, confiscated by the French Government at the opening of the War. The buildings are in a fair state of repair, and stand in the midst of a park-like piece of land. The church is a charming-looking structure in North-German style, a brick building with broad external wooden stairways which climb upward from the front door to the

gallery and the playful turret. Father Ioann is already installed at the clergy-house, and a gang of Russians are at work on the interior of the church. I imagine that within the year the walls of the church will be covered with frescoes in the Russian style, and the atmosphere will be so changed that one would say, despite its origin, that the church must have been built for Orthodoxy.

But one thing is clear, and it is, that however successful the architects and painters may be on the Rue Crimée, the church there could never fittingly take the place of the historic one on the Rue Daru. It is too far from the centre, it is not a region where many Russians live, and it has not the living ties with pre-revolutionary Russia which endear the other to the exiles. It is to be hoped that the right of the Russian Christians to their church on the Rue Daru will be established, and that there will be peace and opportunity for carrying on the good work of the establishment of a spiritual seminary upon this charming other site which accidentally bears the name of a beloved region of Mother Russia.

IV

THE POSITION OF THE BANKS IN PARIS

FRANCE at the present moment has the greatest number of Russian *émigrés*, Czecho - Slovakia coming second. For some years there were great numbers in Germany, but when the rentenmark was introduced the cost of living became so great that many Russians decided to go farther afield. Then Germany started the policy of excluding foreigners from employment. The "Germany for the Germans" cry in 1924 caused another great exodus. France, to her credit be it said, was extremely hospitable, and took over the majority of those fleeing from Germany.

The number in France is variously estimated, but is very considerable. There are three daily papers published in Russian in Paris alone. Most of the *émigrés* live in a hand-to-mouth style ;

some are desperately poor. There is work for all in the French factories, but it is poorly paid, and in the provinces, but Russians do not want to go there. Many have not the stomach for hard work and live by their wits instead. The diversity of occupations is remarkable. General Judenitch is a market-gardener in the south of France. I met the ex-assistant Town-governor of Moscow (*pomo-shchnik gradonatchalnika*) in a villa; he was doing a cook's job, and as he pared potatoes laughingly described how he performed the function of censoring the drama in Moscow. One of the heads of the St. Petersburg secret service edits a newspaper in Paris. Two colonels of the Guards have a poultry farm high up in the hills behind Toulon. You meet brave officers who went through the War still preserving their Georgian crosses, but earning a living as plasterers, plumbers, cleaners. A Countess slaves all day painting backs of chairs—to gain the merest pittance. But the commonest fate is to serve in a shop, or work in a motor factory, or dig in a mine.

There are a few who have preserved their fortune. One wonders how they did it. Some were lucky enough to have had foreign balances; others had villas in England or France, or business connections.

I met in Paris this year Count Kokoftsef, former Prime Minister under the Tsar, and together with my old friend Vishnegradsky, musician and banker, we lunched together. From them I was anxious to learn what I could of the situation of the Russian banks in Paris.

Vishnegradsky was imprisoned by the Bolsheviks, and his plucky little wife sold all that she had to bribe a way into the prison and bribe a way out of it again with her husband. They called on me in London in 1920, two very poor people, and one saw in them a tragic picture of the ruin of the Russian bourgeois. One imagined for them a very shabby future such as that of old Mr. Sedley in *Vanity Fair*, after his bankruptcy. However, I was quite mistaken. No sooner did the old banker get to Paris than he began to pick up the threads of business there. He was president of the International Bank of Petrograd; he soon obtained access to the foreign balances of his bank, and was able, with the help of other financiers, to resuscitate his business in a Paris branch. Fortune smiled on him again.

However, now that France has recognised the Soviets, a new problem arises. All banks within Russia have been Socialised and are understood as belonging to the Soviet. It follows in their

logic that all foreign branches of suppressed or converted Russian banks belong also to the State. If the French law upholds the contention, then the old bankers and financiers may once more have to walk out on to the street.

Both Kokoftsef and Vishnegradsy are directors of the International Bank, and though cautious in what they had to say of the situation, they handed me a statement the gist of which I reproduce here.

When the Bolshevik *coup d'état* took place in October 1917 there were five Russian banks which had branches in Paris :

1. The International.
2. The Russian Bank of Foreign Trade.
3. The Russo-Asiatic.
4. The Petroparis.
5. The Union Bank of Moscow.

All these branches have been functioning in Paris, and the first doubt thrown on the legality of their existence was in October 1924. For France did not admit that Russian acts of nationalisation could have any validity on French soil.

But on October 29, 1924, the order of things was rudely changed by a rule of sequestration applied to the Russian Bank of Foreign Trade. This action was successfully resisted in court in

December 1924, and the order of sequestration was removed. The present prospect, however, is that each of the Russian banks will have to go into court in turn to fight a sequestration order.

If Franco-Soviet negotiations proceed harmoniously and a treaty is signed, it is likely that the banks may lose their suits. But if, as seems more probable, the general trade negotiations come to nothing, it may be presumed that the banks will win. At present each of them is faced with an interdict, but until the matter has been threshed out in the courts business is allowed to take its normal course.

Count Kokoftsef did not foresee any gain to Soviet Russia by these actions, only a gratification of spite against the *émigrés*. Asked if he thought there were any capable financiers among the Bolsheviks, he said : " You cannot be a financier without finance." He did not share the high opinion of M. Krassin which obtains in some commercial circles. Krassin was partly responsible for the flirtations of Moscow with the unfortunate Russo-Asiatic Corporation. The Russian *émigrés* allege that those who shared the secret of the Soviet policy were not above dabbling unworthily in speculation in the shares.

M. Krassin was responsible for the organisation

of wheat export in 1924. It does not redound to his credit that he sold wheat out of the country for what it would fetch in July and August 1924, and his Government was obliged to buy it back at a premium in the winter and spring of 1925.

The big bankers are not of opinion that the Bolshevik leaders are good business men. They have not the business man's code. They mix up politics with business, and when that happens business always suffers. They are divided in opinion as to whether to retain their State monopolies or revert to the capitalist system ; divided also as to the question of rights of property in land. No Russian in Russia and no foreigner in Russia knows where he stands. There is no security of continuity of policy ; a concession to-day is in nowise guaranteed against an expropriation to-morrow. Moscow has a business façade—a shop front, but there is little genuine business going on behind it. Let them get rid of their political theories, and it will not matter who is governing the country, there would be at once a rapid improvement.

I asked news of M. Bark, the Tsar's Finance Minister ; he is living quietly in the country in England. I asked of M. Terestchenko, Minister in the Provisional Government, incidentally a sugar

king ; he is a bank clerk in Oslo (Christiania). As regards other statesmen who once were prominent, M. Pokrowsky, who was Count Kokoftsef's assistant, is advising in the Finance Department of the Lithuanian Government in Kovno. Protopopoff and Stcheglovitof were shot in Moscow. Sturmer, released from the fortress of Peter and Paul, died in hospital. M. Samarin was two years in prison, but is now at liberty, wretchedly poor in Moscow. Prince Lvof, head of the Zemstvo, continued his useful work administering Zemstvo funds in Paris, but died this year. His namesake, Vladimir Lvof, became a Bolshevik after having been Procurator of the Holy Synod in the Provisional Government. The unpopular and impulsive Gutchkof lives quietly in Paris. Kerensky is commonly in Prague ; his son is in England. Milyukof edits a paper in Paris, and seems to stir up much trouble among the various factions of *émigrés*. Bourtsef retains his self-appointed rôle of detective-in-general to all Russians, smelling out plots, conspiracies, intrigues. He is somewhat bent with age, or is it with constant stooping, wrinkled, worn, dusty-looking. I was told that he looked like a church rat. I saw him afterwards, and certainly there was something of the ancient rat about him—he

was something between a rat and a bear. He believes that in all Russia's adversities he at least has not changed.

"Here is our great revolutionary who has become a counter-revolutionary," said Professor Kartashof, introducing him. "No greater enemy of Bolsheviks than he exists."

"I am not a counter-revolutionary," he rejoined gloomily. "I remain what I have always been, a true revolutionary. It is they, the Bolsheviks, who are counter-revolutionaries."

Bourtsef has much left to smell out. For the ways of Russians are uncommonly diverse. I asked of the fate of various counter-revolutionary generals. They seemed to have fared better than their followers.

So the old Russia passed in review before our eyes as we sat in a restaurant in Montmartre and partook of various wines. I used to read Count Kokoftsef's speeches very carefully at one time, for he was in opposition to the Tsar's vodka policy, and never believed in prohibition in Russia. I was tramping the Urals in those days, and never foresaw myself discussing vodka face to face with the president of the Imperial Senate, exiled from his country and in danger of becoming almost as much a tramp as I.

V

THE ALLIANCE OF SOCIALIST
SOVIET REPUBLICS

I

THE U.S.S.R.

IN Russian it is the S.S.S.R. The first initial S, stands for the Russian word *Soiuz*, which has been translated to mean "United", so that in English the full name is "United Socialist Soviet Republics". It seems vaguely to suggest a sort of balance with America's name of the U.S.A. The strict meaning of the word *Soiuz* is, however, "alliance", and the correct name of the Bolshevik super-State is "The Alliance of Socialist Soviet Republics".

In seeking to calm the West, parallels are often drawn to show similarities between the constitution of the United States and that of Bolshevik Russia. The chief difference, as urged by Moscow, in a subsidised publication issued at Prague, is that the U.S.A. is a limited political organisation, but the U.S.S.R. is a growing and

expanding organisation. "Any Socialist Soviet Republic in the world can enter the U.S.S.R.," says the professional exponent of Bolshevism; "and not only those already existent, but those capable of springing into existence."

The name of Russia has been omitted from the official style of the Marxian State, simply for convenience' sake. "Should all the countries in the world join the alliance it would not be necessary to change the present name."

The republics at present included in the U.S.S.R. number twenty, of which may be mentioned: Russia, Little Russia, White Russia, Moldavia, Karelia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Trans-Caucasia, Bokhara (Uzbek), Armenia, Crimea, Turkestan, Eastern Siberia. Besides these, various nomadic tribes, such as the Kirghiz and the Bashkirs, have been nominally organised as republic, and various mountain races, such as the Ossetines and the Abkhastsi, are supposed to enjoy federal autonomy. These are represented in an All-Russian Soviet at Moscow, the president of which at present is M. Rikof, from the republic of Little Russia.

The local authority of the various Soviet republics is strictly subordinate to the universal Soviet in Moscow. Naturally enough in an

international State, nationalist tendencies are not encouraged in Little Russia, Georgia, and the rest, unless they serve higher purposes. At present Moldavian nationalism is being encouraged in order to foment trouble in Rumanian Bessarabia, where a large percentage of the population is Moldavian. Once, however, Bessarabia were wrested from King Karl, a stopper would be put on Moldavian excitement, and the new enlarged republic would be forced into the colourless obedience to the powers in the Kremlin which characterises the Ukraine and White Russia. Similarly Karelia is encouraged to be Karelian largely with a view to infecting the large Karelian population in North-eastern Finland.

But it is not true to say that the U.S.S.R. Government in Moscow is the ultimate authority in Russia. It, in its turn, is dominated by another organisation known commonly as the R.K.P., the Russian Communist Party, the president of which is Zinoviev and the secretary Stalin. As a Russian writer puts it very effectively :

“ There is the Ts.I.K. with its president Kalinin ; there is the Sovnarkom and its president Rikof ; besides Comrades Kamenev and Zuringa there are the military and naval commissariats with Trotsky, president of the revolutionary war

council;¹ there is the Cheka, now re-named the Chief Political Bureau (G.P.U.), with the heedful Djerzhinski and Unslicht; but above all there is the general secretary of the Russian Communist Party (R.K.P.)—the president of its political bureau, Stalin, dictating to all his will in the name of the party, suffocating all Russia, not even from the Kremlin, but by telephone call from the Varvarka Street from the premises of the Ts.K. party.”

We have therefore a form of political Catholicism of which there have been as yet only two Popes, namely, Karl Marx and Lenin. The Cheka or G.P.U. is their Holy Inquisition, and the Communist Party takes the position of a conclave or synod dictating to all administrators and governors the esoteric policy of universal atheism and proletarian revenge. The Communist emissaries to various lands remind one of the activity of the early Jesuits, the system of Jesuitry applied to the creed of atheism.

The dead are being used for the creation of a new myth. Hence the “martyrs’ funerals” accorded Vorovsky and other Communists who have been killed. The sepulture of Lenin in the Red Square at Moscow is the new “sepulchre”

¹ Written before Trotsky’s dismissal.

for which they hope to obtain the veneration of ante-Christian crusaders and pilgrims. The Lenin shrines in the factories and "Lenin corners" in workmen's dwellings are indications of the new significance for Lenin which Communists are seeking.

II

THE SCHISM

WHEN Lenin died there were some Bolsheviks who hoped that a compromise might be effected. Trotsky had been banished to the Caucasus as "not a good Communist"; he was recalled. A nonentity in the person of Rikof was made president of the Sovnarkom. This seemed to make it possible for Trotsky, Zinovief, and Kamenev to rule together without unbearable rivalry. Trotsky, however, is an aloof personality, a man who makes few friends. He has an almost unbearable reserve. At the same time he has an oriental love of show and power. He likes to live in state, to be driven in an old automobile of the Tsar with Cheka guards on the step. He inhabits Yusupof's palace for preference. He is most unlike the cloth-cap Stalin, or that garrulous son of the Ghetto, the noisy Zinovief.

Trotsky, moreover, has talent. He is at least

a capable organiser. He also knows the value of silence. Lenin, indeed, considered Trotsky as the most useful Communist in the party, and he warned the party against Zinovief as a man of small parts and dangerous ambitions. During the first year after the death of Lenin it became clear that there was not room for both Trotsky and Zinovief together in Moscow. They entered the field against one another. Trotsky, with statesmanlike foresight, made up his mind that Russia must re-enter the comity of European nations. Zinovief at once blew the counter-blast of true Marxianism—all European nations must enter the U.S.S.R.

Trotsky found respectable allies in Krassin, Litvinof, Voroshilof, and Rakovsky, and external support in the cabinets of MacDonald and Herriot. He called a secret truce to the other Socialist parties of Russia, successfully beguiled Savenkof back, and actually let loose a pigeon flying to Kerensky. Recognition by England helped his hand; so also did the MacDonald treaty with its prospect of capitalist help. Curious, that Trotsky should invoke capitalism to save dying proletarianism. But it was not so cynical as it looked. Both Kamenef and Zinovief regarded the affair with alarm. That is why Kamenef was

so urgent in his statement that the treaty did not oblige Russia to pay us anything, "not even a louse". That is why Zinovief stated that MacDonald signed the treaty under the compulsion of the Communists in England. That is why the pro-Bolshevik policy of MacDonald was publicly interpreted in Russia as being the beginning of the great proletarian revolution in Great Britain.

Trotsky and Krassin and Rakovsky probably thought otherwise. To them it must have been the beginning of the end of the Marxian experiment in Russia.

It would be folly to deny that Zinovief and Kamenef did not have a large part in the handing of victory to the British Conservatives last November. They worked for that end. The Zinovief letter was not only absolutely authentic, it was part of the Communist campaign to defeat the compromisers and stop the development of Trotsky's program. Zinovief denied the authenticity of the letter merely for expediency. But Trotsky, Rakovsky, and the rest were profoundly mortified by the effect of its publication. They knew it was only too authentic. It was part and parcel of the destructive work of Zinovief, who had persistently

attempted to spoil their diplomatic successes. When Zinovief said publicly that MacDonald would go down to history as one of the world's funny men, when he said that MacDonald was sowing for the Communists to reap, he was deliberately thwarting the compromisers. Imagine, for instance, the secret thoughts of Krassin when reading Zinovief's speeches during the British election campaign ! As for Rakovsky, he must have known that the heads of the Third International were doing their utmost to cut the ground from under his feet. He has the reputation of being a strong Communist, but also of being an opportunist. He was seizing the opportunity of committing Red Russia to a practical compromise. Zinovief was trying to queer the pitch for him. He knew also that the Zinovief letter had only too striking a verisimilitude. He pronounced it a forgery mainly to save his policy.

When the Conservative victory was won it was quite clear that the leaders of the Communist Party were not greatly perturbed. When the MacDonald treaty was jettisoned it played into their hands considerably. It gave them power to dissolve the Trotsky group. Herriot belatedly and inopportunately recognised the Soviet regime and Krassin was sent to Paris as Ambassador, a

post of great responsibility and some danger. It was a kind of honourable exile for him. He was ordered to proceed with a markedly impossible policy summarised in the words—*Loan first ; treaty afterwards*. Rakovsky was allowed to remain in the London backwater. His significance in Communist circles seems now to have greatly waned. Trotsky was ordered to be sick, and at the same time, with almost cynical openness, was ordered to go to Georgia *for his health*.

In connection with this compulsory retirement of Trotsky, Stalin has come considerably into the open. Normally, Stalin is the antithesis of Trotsky. He prefers power to show of power. According to some, Stalin is a much more powerful personality. He is said to have been the real brain directing the Red Army in its fight against Kolchak and Denikin. Trotsky on his white horse took a Roman triumph, but Stalin was the man to whom the honour was due. Not that he grudged it to Trotsky ; he is more of a genuine *sans-culotte*, preferring to wear his old greasy khaki tunic and bedraggled hat, preferring to walk, preferring to be silent.

This exaggerated modesty of Stalin went to such a point that even in Moscow few knew what had been his real rôle. "He believes in Lenin,"

says Grinchevsky, " as he used to believe in God, and is ready to use any means to preserve *the law of Lenin*. In Trotsky he never believed, and authorising Kamenef to unfrock the Red general from the party point of view, he pulled out that general by the ear and cried out, ' You are not a general ; you are not even a Red.' "

So Trotsky has been ordered South. Stalin was in favour of an undisguised expulsion of the War Minister. But his brother Communists thought it better to afford him the shelter of a doctor's certificate. The latest news is that Trotsky after shutting himself up in the former Alexandrovsky Military School in Moscow, has " loyally " retired. If he be truly the man of genius that some hold him to be, it is inconceivable that he would voluntarily desert the main scene of action at such a moment. His passivity under the onslaughts of the Communist leaders and their Press rather suggests a more passive personality than has generally been imagined—even a timid one. There seems to be little likelihood that he will take a lead and occupy the position due to him after the death of Lenin.

While Trotsky has been excluded from office he has also been excluded from the Communist Party. The R.K.P. is engaged in purging itself

of weaker brethren. It does not wish more members so much as stauncher ones. It regards itself as an organism, a vital cell rather than a *growth*. It is for the time being proud of its reduction of numbers of membership. Democracy increases in strength through participation of numbers; but dictatorship is more capable when the numbers are less.

III

THE EXTERNAL PROGRAM

A CHILLING wind has blighted Trotsky's "Spring". He called it Spring—Bolshevism's new leafing-time in Europe. He looked forward to a comfortable shady existence under the trees, but that umbrage has been denied him. Had MacDonald swept Britain at the elections it is possible that we should have seen an amazing growth of what can only be called bourgeois Communism, a prodigal blossoming of the wild flowers of the New Economic Policy, and fresh posies for the "friends of Russia".

There would have been peace of a kind, a somewhat shameful kind, for which, however, Europe in general would have been thankful, peace marred only by filibusters of the incorrigible but insignificant extremists. Trotsky said on the eve of his downfall (Nov. 7, 1924): "When we reckoned on a speedy victory of the revolution in

Europe we overlooked a fundamental factor, the virtual non-existence of the Communist Party outside our borders". To which Zinovief replied: "I know that some of our comrades are dreaming of a Bonaparte. I know also that we have entered upon the phase of the most severe struggle on the part of the Communist Party for its existence. But I know also that we are strong, and that the iron hand of the workman-peasant dictatorship will strangle those who attempt to sell us to the bourgeoisie."

Zinovief proves for the time being to be right. The cause has triumphed over the opportunity, Communism over business, the world-program over the plan for the mere rehabilitation of Russia. Henceforth the external program of Bolshevism, which might conceivably have become negligible, is now the real issue for Russia and Europe. It is an absurd program, for all steps taken to realise it lead eventually to disaster for the Communist Party itself. It is briefly—the Bolshevisation of the world.

The British Empire is to be dissolved ; revolution is to be achieved in every State in the world ; the ill-will of Germany towards the Succession States and France is to be exploited to the limit ; the discontent of the subject races of the East is

to be focussed to Moscow—"the Mecca and Medina of all enslaved peoples"; the "Yellow peril" is to be organised and made a reality. Asia shall move against Europe in the moment of Europe's disorganisation and revolutionary madness.

Here we have not so much the creation of a super-State in view as the world-wide revenge of class upon class and race upon race.

This may seem incredible to those who believe, like Purcell, Kenworthy, and the rest, that Bolsheviks are merely working to put baths in working-men's homes. Baths, yes, but baths of blood. Hate let loose on such a scale as the Communists envisage means wave behind wave of hate: the first downs the aristocrats, the second the capitalists, the third the shopkeepers, the fourth the clerks and the teachers and doctors, the fifth the working-man. What are our working-men but little bourgeois? But it is not simply their jobs that they will lose, but their happiness. The whole of the working-class both in England and America is superior to the working-classes in general in Europe. That class is *over*, not *under*, and it is marked red for ruin.

All this seems a madman's dream. It is not even a bogey with which we can be terrified. We

believe that the lusts of ages past cannot be unlocked. We do not believe that this dreadful chimera is realisable.

Nevertheless a very powerful organisation is moving towards the realisation of that program. Each step upon it means battle. There can be no quiet progress—for the program is calamitous, and not least calamitous, I believe, for the leaders at Moscow who have stopped the compromisers and have cleared a space in Europe for their action.

IV

THE METHOD

WAR is not to be waged in the old-fashioned way, by armies crossing frontiers and seizing territories. Victory is to be achieved by struggle from within. The fires to revolt are to be lighted and fed within each capitalistic State-organism. The spirit of rebellion against the existing order is to be encouraged wherever it be found, even when its tendency is nationalistic, as in Ireland, in India, in Croatia, in Cuba.

It is of enormous advantage to the Communists that there is everywhere in the world a natural undercurrent of rebellious feeling. Hate lives and is fed by the ordinary daily happenings of modern life. Moscow's problem is chiefly to organise this hate, and give it visible leadership.

Neither Russians nor Russian Jews are very practical in their application of political theories, but their chosen method is an easier one than

that of war. Leadership they have facilely attained. All the disgruntled and rebellious and oppressed of the world look to the Komintern, as it is now called (the Communist International), for leadership to revenge and victory. The resultant movement in all parts of the world is fed with words, promises, successes, and it is trained by advice. It is trained to go under and grow bigger—not to come into the open prematurely.

The spokesmen of the Communist Party are not secretive, however, and it is easy to gather the details of the plans of their world campaign. The Communist Party in most countries of the world behaves like a secret society; but not so the Russian Communist Party, which is continually advertising its world program.

1. The Communist Parties in all lands are to be strengthened, especially in England.
2. The Headquarters of the Party in each capital is to be encouraged in its work of organisation.
3. Communist nuclei or cells are to be formed in every barracks, military and police unit, in every ship and naval unit, in every workshop and factory room, in every yard, in post-office, telegraphic, and wireless services. One safe Communist agent is needed in every public organisation,

one to whom literature can be given, money to take a room in which people can meet, etc.

4. Every popular discontent, such as of unemployment, or high cost of bread, or eviction from home, reduction in wages, strike-breaking, is to be taken advantage of.
5. At times of general excitement, as in election time, unconventional methods are to be encouraged; better disorder and mob-violence than mere Radical electoral victories. The proved and reliable are to be initiated into the deeper doctrines of revolution, the repudiation of constitutionalism and the ballot-box in favour of working-class dictatorship, achieved by a sudden coup, and the setting up of workmen's committees instead of parliamentary government.
6. Encouragement to be given to "nationalism" wherever it is found opposing Imperialism, even though that nationalism in itself, like the Sinn Fein movement, have nothing in common with Marxian doctrines.

A very considerable business of the Russian Communist Party is the buying of men and women for their extra-territorial propaganda work.

The R.K.P., to gain its ends, cannot, however, rely entirely on its natural partisans, who are so often merely abnormal people who are by nature too bitter, like inedible fruits, people who by nature are cranks and subject to ridicule, people who are by nature unbalanced, and in the habit of being on the wrong side in disputes. Its problem is to attract the balanced, the staid, the normal. It is agreed that unless the bourgeois can be got to betray the bourgeois the battle cannot be won. It is therefore busily engaged enlisting the sympathies of respectable, patriotic people. Nowhere is their success in this business more marked than in England, where there are some weighty not unpatriotic people on the side of the Soviets, human and kind, experienced, educated, and shrewd people. One need not mention Clydesiders or denizens of Poplar. It is baffling, but it is a fact. The Soviet Government can count on a number of reputable public men in England. And besides these, it has the support of a number of contractors and business men, trade experts, club men and society women. One of the objects of the Bolshevik delegation in each country is the buying of souls. Tchichikof's great adventure is being repeated. Only the new Tchichikof does not

always propose cash for purchase. He has many currencies. A man here and there he buys with promises of contracts if treaties are signed ; others he buys with opportunity of political advancement or for a place in the limelight.

It is of advantage to the Bolsheviks when some square-headed, wall-eyed Briton will say in his club, " After all, it's a lot of rot not working in with the Bolshies. The Conservatives will have to do it just the same as Labour." It is a great thing to have a big bourgeois paper putting in a word for Moscow from week to week. To capture a club-bore here, a journalist there is part of the plan of campaign. We see already certain people posted at various points braying Bolshevism at given intervals. How exactly they have been persuaded to this function is a curiosity. But more curious than the means is the fact that most of them are stoutly convinced that they are in themselves independent witnesses of the truth.

There is a society in London for the improvement of cultural relations with Soviet Russia, attended by some of what are called " the best people ". Moscow has said a true thing : it is that " the bourgeois can only perish at the hands of the bourgeois ". So Moscow works in society to gain over those who can ruin their kind. The

secret movement is not without success. Vantage ground is being gained by the parlour Bolsheviks. How otherwise account for such a phenomenon as the jockeying of Mr. G. A. B. Dewar from the editorial chair of the *Nineteenth Century*?

Mr. Dewar wrote in the *Nineteenth Century and After* of March 1924 the following words :

“ The question of what we shall gain or lose financially by full acknowledgment of, and friendly relations with, the leaders of Bolshevism is, from the standpoint of the decent and intelligent man and woman, one of absolutely minor importance. Incomparably, the more vital point is this : by recognising the Bolshevik leaders and their agents, and by arranging to have friendly relations with them, we are acting disgracefully. We are sacrificing the nation's honour ; and the honour of a nation springs out of, and is cognate with, the honour of the individuals who form that nation. The leaders of the Bolshevik Party who control Russia and form her Government to-day make not the least secret of their wish and their intention to destroy the whole system of civilisation, including Christianity, on which this country has been built up, and to which it still adheres ; and at the same time the leaders of the Bolshevik Party propose to traffic with us for commercial and financial purposes. Their scheme thus flouts anything in the nature of honour, national and

individual. By falling in with that scheme we are acting in the same spirit as the Bolsheviks are, a spirit which is nothing if not debasing and godless. Besides, we are playing the part of cowards. In vice we are sinking to their level ; in courage we are sinking below it.

“As for the excuse that by working in with the Soviet Government we are encouraging ‘ world peace ’, it is inane as the attempt to persuade any truly intelligent man or woman that the Bolshevik leaders are idealists, men of noble vision.”

Pressure was brought to bear upon him to change his attitude, but he stood by his ideals, preferring to leave the review.

He was a very able editor, and he gave life and power to this heavy vehicle of British public opinion during his six years of editorship. It cannot be said that such a man is dislodged by accident. A hidden hand came out of British business and lifted him from the board.

ADDENDUM

The following is the famous letter which was published in most British daily papers on the morning of Saturday, October 25, 1924, three days before the polling day of the General Election. The Labour candidates endeavoured to ignore it, as in general they had been

endeavouring to ignore the issue of the Russian treaty, but the Red scare made itself increasingly felt during the week-end. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald could do nothing to improve the situation. He was silent, he hesitated, he then used wild words. All subordinates were weakly truculent, dismissing the letter as a forgery, some being inclined to think that the Foreign Office had forged it, others that Conservative headquarters and the *Daily Mail* had foisted it on MacDonald ; others again said the letter came from Riga. As, however, the secret by which the letter was obtained was well kept, the ready speakers were in difficulties. Vague references are commonly made to the letter now in Labour propaganda as the "Red Bogy". But it stood the test both of a Labour and a Conservative committee of investigation, as well as the expert consideration of the Foreign Office itself, and it stands as a genuine document, worthy of re-perusal and of reconsideration.

Very Secret.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, THIRD (COMMUNIST) INTERNATIONAL PRESIDIUUM, September 15, 1924, MOSCOW, to the CENTRAL COMMITTEE, BRITISH COMMUNIST PARTY.

DEAR COMRADES—The time is approaching for the Parliament of England to consider the treaty concluded between the Governments of Great Britain and the S.S.S.R. for the purpose of ratification. The fierce campaign raised by the British bourgeoisie around the question shows that the majority of the same, together

with reactionary circles, are against the treaty for the purpose of breaking off an agreement consolidating the ties between the proletariats of the two countries leading to the restoration of normal relations between England and the S.S.S.R.

The proletariat of Great Britain, which pronounced its weighty word when danger threatened a breaking off of the past negotiations and compelled the Government of MacDonald to conclude the treaty, must show the greatest possible energy in the further struggle for ratification, and against the endeavours of British capitalists to compel Parliament to annul it.

It is indispensable to stir up the masses of the British proletariat to bring into movement the army of unemployed proletarians whose position can be improved only after a loan has been granted to the S.S.S.R. for the restoration of her economics, and when business collaboration between the British and Russian proletariats has been put in order.

It is imperative that the group in the Labour Party sympathising with the treaty should bring increased pressure to bear upon the Government and Parliamentary circles in favour of the ratification of the treaty. Keep close observation over the leaders of the Labour Party, because these may easily be found in the leading-strings of the bourgeoisie.

The foreign policy of the Labour Party, as it is already, represents an inferior copy of the policy of the Curzon Government ; organise a campaign of disclosure of the foreign policy of MacDonald. The Ikki (Executive Committee, Third — Communist — International) will willingly place at your disposal the wide material in its possession regarding the activities of British Imperialism in the Middle and Far East.

In the meanwhile, however, strain every nerve in the struggle for the ratification of the treaty, in favour of a continuation of negotiations regarding the regulation of relations between the S.S.S.R. and England. A settlement of relations between the two countries will assist in the revolutionising of the international and British proletariat, not less than a successful rising in any of the working districts of England, as the establishment of close contact between the British and Russian proletariat, the exchange of delegations and workers, etc., will make it possible for us to extend and develop the propaganda of ideas in Leninism in England and the colonies.

Armed warfare must be preceded by a struggle against the inclinations to compromise which are embedded among the majority of British workmen, against the ideas of evolution and peaceful extermination of capitalism. Only then will it be possible to count upon complete success of an armed insurrection.

In Ireland and the colonies the case is different. There there is a national question, and this represents too great a factor for success for us to waste time on a prolonged preparation of the working classes. But even in England, as in other countries where the workers are politically developed, events themselves move more rapidly to revolutionise the working masses than propaganda. For instance, a strike movement, repressions by the Government, etc.

From your last report it is evident that agitation propaganda work in the Army is weak; in the Navy a very little better. Your explanation that the quality of the members attracted justifies the quantity is right in principle, nevertheless it would be desirable to have "cells" in all the units of the troops, particularly among those quartered in the large centres of the country,

and also among factories working on munitions and at military stores depots.

We request that the most particular attention be paid to these latter. In the event of danger of war, with the aid of the latter and in contact with the transport workers, it is possible to paralyse all the military preparations of the bourgeoisie and make a start in turning an Imperialist war into a class war.

More than ever we should be on our guard. Attempts at intervention in China show that world Imperialism is still full of vigour, and is once more making endeavours to restore its shaken position and cause a new war, which as its final objective is to bring about the break-up of the Russian proletariat, and the suppression of the budding world revolution, and further would lead to the enslavement of the colonial peoples.

“ Danger of War ”, “ The Bourgeoisie seeks War and Capital Fresh Markets ”—these are the slogans which you must familiarise the masses with, with which you must go to work into the mass of the proletariat. These slogans will open to you the doors of comprehension of the masses, will help you to capture them and march under the banner of Communism.

The military section of the British Communist Party, so far as we are aware, further suffers from a lack of specialists, the future directors of the British Red army. It is time you thought of forming such a group, which, together with the leaders, might be, in the event of an outbreak of active strife, the brain of the military organisation of the party. Go attentively through the lists of the military “ cells ”, detailing from them the more energetic and capable men. Turn attention to the more talented military specialists who have for one reason or another left the service and hold Socialist views. Attract them

into the ranks of the Communist Party if they desire honestly to serve the proletariat and desire in the future to direct not the blind mechanical forces in the service of the bourgeoisie, but a national army. Form a directing operative head of the military section. Do not put this off to a future moment which may be pregnant with events and catch you unprepared.

Desiring you all success both in organisation and in your struggle. With Communist greetings,

ZINOVIEV, *President of the Presidium of the Ikki.*

McMANUS, *Member of the Presidium.*

KUUSINEN, *Secretary.*

The following is the letter of protest signed and sent by Mr. J. D. Gregory, but actually drafted by Mr. MacDonald himself. The original draft was written presumably by Mr. Gregory, but MacDonald, stung to fury by the treacherous attacks upon him being made in current speeches by Zinoviev, made it much stronger. In fact, he struck Gregory's draft to " smithereens " and dictated something entirely his own. These, therefore, are in reality the words of Labour's first Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary :

FOREIGN OFFICE, *October 24, 1924.*

SIR—I have the honour to invite your attention to the enclosed copy of a letter which has been received by the Central Committee of the British Communist Party from the Presidium of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, over the signature of M. Zinoviev, its president, dated September 15.

(1) The letter contains instructions to British subjects to work for the violent overthrow of existing institutions in this country, and for the subversion of His Majesty's armed forces as a means to that end.

(2) It is my duty to inform you that His Majesty's Government cannot allow this propaganda, and must regard it as a direct interference from outside in British domestic affairs.

(3) No one who understands the constitution and the relationships of the Communist International will doubt its intimate connection and contact with the Soviet Government. No Government will ever tolerate an arrangement with a foreign Government by which the latter is in formal diplomatic relations of a correct kind with it, whilst at the same time a propagandist body organically connected with that foreign Government encourages and even orders subjects of the former to plot and plan revolutions for its overthrow. Such conduct is not only a grave departure from the rules of international comity, but a violation of specific and solemn undertakings repeatedly given to His Majesty's Government.

(4) So recently as June 4 of last year the Soviet Government made the following solemn agreement with H.M. Government :

The Soviet Government undertakes not to support with funds or in any other form persons or bodies or agencies or institutions whose aim is to spread discontent or to foment rebellion in any part of the British Empire . . . and to impress upon its officers and officials the full and continuous observance of these conditions.

258 SOCIALIST SOVIET REPUBLICS

(5) Moreover, in the treaty which His Majesty's Government recently concluded with your Government still further provision was made for the faithful execution of good and friendly relations between the two countries.

His Majesty's Government mean that these undertakings shall be carried out, both in the letter and in the spirit, and it cannot accept the contention that whilst the Soviet Government undertakes obligations a political body, as powerful as itself, is to be allowed to conduct a propaganda and support it with money which is in direct violation of the official agreement.

The Soviet Government either has or has not the power to make such agreements. If it has the power, it is its duty to carry them out and see that the other parties are not deceived. If it has not this power, and if responsibilities which belong to the State in other countries are in Russia in the keeping of private and irresponsible bodies, the Soviet Government ought not to make agreements which it knows it cannot carry out.

(6) I should be obliged if you would be good enough to let me have the observations of your Government on this subject without delay.

I have the honour to be, with high considerations, Sir, your obedient servant (in the absence of the Secretary of State),

(Signed) J. D. GREGORY.

No satisfactory reply was ever received in answer to this protest. Though signed by Mr. Gregory, it was actually written by Mr. MacDonald, his only complaint being that it was despatched without first being sent to him for revision. It was then made public suddenly because it was found that the original Zinovief letter

had somehow got into the hands of the Press. Mr. MacDonald, I believe, did not sanction the publication, and there lies his only grievance in the matter. He believes that publication of the documents was effected not as a matter affecting the public good, but in order to influence the electorate in favour of Conservatism.

An automatic denial of authenticity of the letter was made by M. Rakovsky, the Chargé d'Affaires. An impudent demand for the punishment of our Foreign Office officials was made by Moscow. Attempts were made on the part of the Bolsheviks to find out who had actually betrayed them, but the action of the British Government was vigorous. Mr. Gregory's Note was confirmed, and at the same time notification of the abandonment of the Anglo-Bolshevik treaty was made public.

Seemingly the people who were most upset by what had happened were not the Bolsheviks themselves, who immediately transferred their centre of foreign interest to Paris, but the sympathisers with the Bolsheviks in our midst. They have been routed in the fields of public opinion.

V

THE BRITISH TRADE UNIONISTS' DELEGATION

ZINOVIEFF, at the Fifth Congress of the Communist International, made an unusually emphatic statement about the campaign in England.

"The most important section of the Communist International from the political point of view is not the German or the Russian, but the English one," said he. "It is a curious position; our party there numbers only three to four thousand members, but it has a considerable influence in the country. *To create in England a large Communist Party—such is the main task of the period we are passing through.*" And he added: "The main task of the Communist International in all fields is now being transferred to England. If we manage to create in England a large Communist Party, half of the victory on the European scale will be won. The conditions are already ripe for that."

TRADE UNIONISTS' DELEGATION 261

Zinovief was followed by many speakers, and among them was Comrade Lozovsky, secretary of the Red International of Labour Unions, who gave to the Congress a new plan for the campaign against England : " Let us capture the trade union movement there."

" The most important problem of the Communist Party in the trade union movement is the organisation of sections within the unions, the enlargement and strengthening of the factory committees, the uniting of all the opposition elements in the trade unions," said he, and he was supported by Manuilsky and others, while the English delegate urged that everything should be done to dethrone the acknowledged leaders of the trade union movement in England. Thomas and Henderson were considered specially obnoxious.

There was much sound and fury at the Fifth Congress of the Third International. Its deliberations and declarations received comparatively little attention. Doubtless it would have been folly to have discussed seriously the great plans for the destruction of the British Empire which were unfolded by certain delegates. The Empire has a spiritual strength in it, a binding force of kinship and common interest. Even Mr. MacDonald

in his short space of office was converted into a champion of the Empire. A blow at India or at Egypt can be warded off with vigour. But there are ways of attacking England at home, and one of these, the Bolsheviks think, is through our trade unions.

The British Trade Union delegation, composed of Messrs. Purcell, Bramley, Findlay, Smith, Turner, Tillett, and Bromley, was invited to Russia with a view to establishing a united front. After a week's consultation in Moscow with the Soviets, it was agreed to form an "Anglo-Russian Committee for World Trade Union Unity".

It should be remarked that our British delegates arrived in Moscow in a very bad temper. It was just after the elections, wherein two of them had lost their seats in Parliament, Tillett and Purcell. They were called upon to explain the failure of Labour to sweep the country, and, above all, the failure of their own candidatures. The delegation had been invited before the elections, in the heyday of Communist power in England, when Zinovief could boast of the remarkable secret power of his friends in the British Parliament, forcing the hands of MacDonald in the matter of the Russian treaty and of the Campbell case.

TRADE UNIONISTS' DELEGATION 263

Mr. Ben Tillet ascribed the set-back to the effect of the Zinovief letter, which he was convinced was a forgery. Mr. Purcell also apparently took a similar view.

Instead of discussing the trade union situation, the delegation discussed the Zinovief letter. Zinovief himself came and told them that it was a forgery. That, I think, is the greatest proof they hold that the letter was forged. They rallied round the president of the Third International. They could see by his face he was not the sort of man to tell lies. They found in Zinovief an engaging and charming personality, and were ready to take his word even against the opinion of MacDonald himself.

Strictly speaking, this delegation seems to have been one of the greenest ever sent from this country to Russia. It takes a clever and experienced man to understand life in Russia—it is so different from life on the rest of the Continent. It needs also a knowledge of the Russian language and of the ways of Russians.

If, for instance, I should claim to know anything about Russia, I should apologise by saying that I had tramped five or six thousand miles up and down the country and had lived there for years. I should say I spoke the language, that I

had lived with the peasants, pilgrimaged with them, travelled with them, that I had read the Russian classics in the original, and receive my Russian morning paper even now.

But the trade union delegation must be supermen, possessed of super-cheek, when without any background of knowledge they can go to Russia and at once make striking pronouncements on the situation.

One of the most remarkable feats of the delegation was a lightning visit to the Caucasus mountains, and a lightning decision as to the condition of Georgia. The Georgian insurrection, which had no help from either England or France, was put down in the summer of 1924 with the utmost ferocity. The fighters retreated to the fastnesses of the mountains; the Bolsheviks wreaked their revenge on the women, children, and old men left behind in the towns and valley hamlets. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, having visited Georgia in time past, had been an ardent champion of the Georgian nation, but being in office this summer and under the watchful eyes of Morel, Kenworthy, Lansbury, and the rest, he was obliged to remain silent. They sang "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled" at his political meetings, but no Wallace arose to save Georgia.

TRADE UNIONISTS' DELEGATION 265

However, the T.U.C. men went to Georgia. The only roads across it were blocked with snow at the time. But they put their noses into Vladikavkaz and Tiflis, smelt no blood, saw that there were some live Caucasians walking about there still, and at once wired off their approbation of Soviet rule there in a statement which was reproduced all over the world. It said, in brief, that Georgia is all right ; it spoke of the " devotion of the immense majority of Georgians to the Soviet Government ".

Somebody told them that. It reminds me of a statement of a Labour delegate after he came back from Russia in 1917. " The Tsar was about to sign a separate peace," said he. " Kerensky told me himself."

If some one tells a pro-Bolshevik what he wants to hear, that is confirmation to him as good as holy writ.

Curiously enough, the trade union delegation not only accepted what was told them about conditions in Russia and Georgia, but also about conditions in Egypt. They could not claim to have any special knowledge about Egypt over and above that of the fur-clad Muscovites and Semites of the Kremlin. Almost as if they understood themselves as servants of the Communist

International, they undertook to form a Hands-off-Egypt Society when they got home.

We awaited their return. John Bull had something to say to them. But they came home quietly, without bands or flags. Their advisers warned them not to open their mouths. Their advisers, at the same time, provided them with a preliminary statement of their activities and opinions, and issued it to the Press. It said that the delegation was of opinion that millions of British capital could now with safety be invested in Russia, as conditions were so greatly improved.

It said not a word about the united trade union front. Certainly trade union funds are not designated for investment in Russia. On the contrary, the Communists, if they can raise money from the British capitalists, would be ready to pay over a certain proportion to the political funds of the united unions. The important moves in Moscow's game will not be made public. They were not to be found in the larger report of the delegation. The objective in view is the capture of the trade unionist political movement for the Third International. That cannot be done by posting notices, but rather by changing the course of the ship in the night.

But what do the British trade unionists think

of it? Some million of them voted Conservative at the last election, and more still would have voted that way had the election campaign lasted another week and the Zinovief letter had time to sink into their minds.

But what will be their attitude towards the new Moscow conspiracy? Personally, I am inclined to think that if Labour is to make sure of its future in this country it will have to purge itself of those of its representatives who are capable of being unfaithful to England, and it will have to return to its own domestic problems rather than concentrate upon Russia, of which it knows, and can know, very little.

.
. .

The final report of our trade union delegates, issued in February 1925, had, it seemed to me, little to do with the real object of the mission. Its object, it states, is to educate the British electorate. Did the delegation go out to get educative matter for us? The report is a volume of propaganda beginning with a picture of "Bloody Sunday—January 1905", and it contains little that is damaging to the cause of revolution.

It would be unfair to seize upon the damaging

admissions, as they are not representative of the book. There are, however, some interesting opinions; one is that in time the "Living Church" may canonise Lenin. I should not be surprised. It is a fitting comment on the activities of the "Living Church" that it should be capable of canonising an atheist. Now that Tokhon the Patriarch is dead it is possible we may see some surprising developments in the power of the "Living Church".

The publication of the report was followed in April 1925 by the arrival of delegates from Soviet Russia and a Trade Union Conference in London. At this conference it was decided to unify the Anglo-Bolshevik trade union front under an international banner inscribed "Workers of the World Unite" and "Long Live the World-Wide Federation of the Trade Union Movement." Thus the first step in the program announced by the Fifth Communist Congress was achieved.

VI

THE PEASANTRY AND THE REVOLUTION

COMMUNISTS frequently employ the terminology of the War when speaking of their affairs. It is common to speak of an external and an internal front. The external front of Bolshevism is in Paris and London, or in the Border States ; but the internal front is the village at home, the peasantry, the peasants' church, their language, their lore. From time to time the weight of the Red attack is thrown from one side to another. Now the external campaign is regarded as the more important ; now the internal one. There are externalists and internalists, just as in the Great War there were Easterners and Westerners, some holding the War would be settled in France, others in Russia. After the set-back experienced in London and Paris, the attention of the Russian Communist Party was switched to the internal

front, and the alleged serious menace proceeding from the peasantry. The richer peasants—*kulaki*—were alleged to be organising passive or active revolt of the agricultural masses in every province. Rumour had it that Trotsky in disfavour might lead a peasants' war. Propaganda was thrown out to discredit Trotsky with the peasants. Undoubtedly a struggle goes on all the while on the internal front, and if it does not get reported in the daily news it is only because its details are not sufficiently striking.

The best map of Soviet Russia to-day would be a railway map, or rather, a map showing those railways which are now working. Five miles from the railway station the influence of the modern socialistic republic wanes, and the old Russia recommences. It is possible for travellers into the depths of the country to return saying that not much seems to have changed. Revolutionising the spirit of the country has proved to be a much more difficult thing to accomplish than the revolution in the towns. Fantastic Marxian experiments may be tried in Moscow, but there is not so much scope for them in peasant Russia.

Two motives guided the peasants in the revolution: the first was war-weariness, and the

second was land-hunger ; and both have now disappeared. It is commonly forgotten that the war-sufferings of the peasant-soldiers in the Great War reached the limit of human endurance. In our faultiness of imagination in England we visualised something in Russia which we called the great Russian steam-roller—an engine which never existed. If anything, the Germans were the steam-roller, and the Russians went under it. And then, our great will to victory prevented us during the terrible years of strain from ever stressing the agonies of the soldiers in the line, of our own soldiers, or of our Allies. The War, alas, was even worse in the East than in the West. To take but one example, quite horrible enough, the Russians met German gas almost entirely without gas-masks. One can only regard as worse than useless the wretched strips of linen soaked in chemicals given to the soldiers to put over their mouths.

For a peasantry who did not really know what the War was about, the sufferings at last strained all the traditional passivity, the unquestioning obedience. And when the chance came, the army broke up. There was the great unorganised flight from the front back to the villages. Panic bred terrorism, and the revolutionary bands of

1917 and 1918 were largely made up of military deserters, afraid of the power of officers and all superiors, bound together to save themselves from court-martial, restored discipline, restored war.

They overlooked, or had no conception of the gallantry and devotion of their ex-leaders ; they saw in them only the power above them, the master. They made common cause against all who wore officer uniform, seeking out even mere subalterns in corners of railway carriages and lynching them by the side of the line. They invented the unjust and terrible formula, to become, alas, so common—

“ You lived on us ; you drank our blood.”

Drifting, driving homeward to all their little villages, they did the dreadful work of spreading the revolutionary ferment throughout all Russia. They made the great Red storm which Lenin rode. Lenin's capacity must be judged by the fact that he was able to ride it, and that out of the midst of fleeing millions he was able to call to the service of the Red flag a proletarian army. This was an army which could shout and sing and murder and run—not, strictly speaking, a fighting army, useless against the Germans, and only of use against other bands of Russians as

spiritually exhausted as themselves. The shameful peace of Brest-Litovsk was signed, and then Russia's war became mainly civil war. The revolutionary fervour of the Russian peasant might have abated had not the other great motive come into play—land-hunger.

The peasants, these mad desirers of land, were slaves seventy years ago. They were bought and sold at auction; they were transferred at will from property to property. But in this short space of time they have gone all the way from being the chattels of their masters to making their masters outcasts and wage-slaves.

The former landowner of Tver, possessed of antique manor and square miles of land, is now labouring in a French factory for a bare pittance, barely enough to keep wife and family in a slum dwelling. His ex-tenants are squatting on his lands, gorged to satiety with mere earth, and understanding at last that land without labour does not feed. The children of the serfs have ransacked the old mansion. They have outbreathed all the hot revolutionary formulas about living on the life-blood of the people. But having done so, they have largely forgotten about it. What they really needed was less land and more modern machinery, better methods of cultivation,

more actual work done on each acre. Now that they have more land they are actually cultivating considerably less.

It is one of the paradoxes of the situation in Russia that having confiscated the Crown lands, the great estates of the Grand Dukes, and all the landed property of the smaller and greater nobles, Russia is in constant danger of famines, and the area of peasant cultivation grows less and less.

Here for the peasantry the revolution ended. Despite the Marxian rule at Moscow, an ecstatic glorification of the idea of private property set in. If General Denikin had been able to convince the peasants that they would receive legal title to their new lands he would probably have defeated the Communists. If he had not been accompanied on his campaign by a number of dispossessed landowners eager to turn the peasants out and re-establish the old property rights, it is possible he might have won. The peasantry were not defending the revolution as such ; they were defending their newly-gotten lands.

However that may be, Denikin failed. The White hopes have vanished. The idea of a returning landowner full of revenge has faded. The memory of the War itself is slowly receding. We have to-day a Russia with a new problem—

how to reconcile the main idea of the revolution with the peaceful way of life and the normal desires of the heart.

The large Red standing army cannot be kept indefinitely and without break on active service. The young fellows yearn for their homes. They go on leave back to the village, to their mothers, to their young wives. They bring their grievances, together with their noisy talk, bring sometimes their supposed denial of Church and God, their new moral code to the test of the old-established peasant life and its traditions.

It is true to say they find no counterpart to the excitements of garrison towns. Odessa may be all agog with the project of carrying the flag of internationalism across the Dniester and making revolution in Rumania. Minsk may talk big of the coming downfall of Poland. Such programs mean nothing to the peasantry at home. Diplomatic successes of Rakovsky or Krassin mean nothing five miles from a railway station. What does mean more is the narration of the social changes in the towns, the innumerable stories of "Ilyitch's" tomb in Moscow, and the voices of the ghosts in the Red Square, the story of Chicherin's son having become a monk, and what Chicherin said to him, fantastic legends of the

renewing of the gold on the domes of churches which had been stripped, and of the colours on old ikons, legends about the murdered Tsar and his family, stories of churches made into night-clubs, stories of what has happened to the great shrines of Russia, to the relics and the wonder-working ikons.

Pilgrimage being now discountenanced in Soviet Russia, pilgrims being liable to arrest by the authority of local soviets, there is not as much movement out of the heart of Russia as there was. Religious fervour is confined to home. The great monasteries are deprived of their peasant throngs, their all-Russian gatherings and choruses. Some have been closed, some changed into communal farms, some made into barracks, and some into prisons. It was the policy of the Tsars to encourage the building of monasteries in the most outlandish places of the Empire. Politically this proved to be a convenient way of Russianising the country. Pilgrims were attracted even more by distant than by local shrines. But to-day these very distant shrines have been found to be useful places of banishment for political conspirators, and for those incautious shopkeepers who made too much money in the first burst of the New Economic Policy in Russia. Thus the famous

Solovetsky Monastery on the White Sea swarms to-day with Russian patriots and N.E.P. men.

Under these circumstances it will be readily seen into what atmosphere the peasant soldier plunges when he goes on leave from his regiment, an atmosphere of religious speculation and discontent. At least no village church is converted into a cinema. The old priest may have died, no young one come to take his place, but the services go on. We have to-day in Russia the growth of a folk-church taking the place of a properly guided church. The people have been plainly told in many proclamations that the age of miracles is past. But while there was superstition before with priests, there must be very much more now when priests are dying off, and when the civilising influence of pilgrimaging is withdrawn.

The schools have officially been taken away from the Church, and bands of Communist teachers have been distributed among the villages, a few hundred among tens of thousands of villages. But these young atheists have had very little success. Each teacher would need to have a small armed force at his disposal to enforce his right to teach the children. It was found this summer that in almost every case inspected the

Communist teacher had been forced to do some sort of manual labour in exchange for food, and that when there was a priest the village children were being taught by him.

M. Lunacharsky and Mme. Lenin in Moscow are much perturbed by this state of affairs, which, owing to the extent of peasant Russia, is for the time being completely irremediable. Marxian ideas, it appears, can in nowise be propagated by merely sending teachers to the villages. The new Living Church has also been tried with a view to breaking down the authority of the old Church. But that also does not seem to function outside the towns, is not possessed by the necessary zeal, and seems to work chiefly for cash, for immunity from personal persecution, and for security as regards meals in the many times of famine.

Soviet Russia to-day is, as we have seen, strongly divided against itself. The Zinovieffs are fighting for the cause; the Krassins for the food. Trotsky inclines to the food side. All the Bolsheviks are agreed on one point, and that is, that whether the peasant becomes a Marxian or no, he must be made to discharge more grain at the rail-siding.

Punitive bands are despatched from the railway into the depths of this old superstitious unmoving

peasant Russia to ensure the filling of the grain-sacks. This comes hardest upon those nearest to the railway line. They yield to the Commissars or else migrate farther inward. For the rest, the peasants simply do not now grow the grain which the towns need. Being out of sympathy with the new life of the towns and with the methods of the town commissaries, they will do nothing for love. And as no manufactured goods are offered them except at fantastic prices, there is little inducement to barter. The peasant's common aim has become to cultivate just enough land and keep just enough stock to feed his family. The area of superfluity has grown less and less, and it is evidently going to be a stiff task persuading the peasants to grow for export or even to grow for the needs of the rest of the proletariat.

In the heart of Russia, therefore, it is a peasantry living for a peasantry, not a peasantry living for Russia. Nevertheless, that heart is still sound.

Princes and lords may flourish and may fade,
A breath can make them as a breath has made.

The Trotskys and Zinoviefs pass. They are not novelties in the world's history. They pass. And one can take comfort in the thought of the national reserves whence the new Russia must

derive its strength. Internationalism also passes, fails before our eyes. In the heart of Russia a lamp is burning before a shrine not at present visible to our eyes. But when the new moment of destiny arrives, that lamp will be carried forth and set upon the highest altar in the Kremlin. It will be the lamp of the genius of the Russian people.

VII

CONCLUSION

THERE have been so many false dawns that one hesitates to herald another. Yet who doubts that Russia in division must become once more united Russia. The quality of the prophecy lies in the allotment of the period of time to elapse. Too often it has been said that the Bolsheviki would shortly be thrown off and that the real Russians would be in the saddle. Yet I hear of money-lenders furnishing needy aristocrats on the security of their presumptive future. I frequently hear of prominent exiles having a Jewish friend and benefactor. The sense of the market is in favour of a restored Russia. On the Stock Exchange the old Russian loans, securities, bonds, are by no means flat and dead. There is a flutter of life in them due to an instinctive feeling that Russia will recover.

The first vital asset of the old Russia is her

staunch peasantry, a hundred million strong. Faith is the substance of things hoped for, and we have faith that an unpractical, unpopular, and utterly non-representative Government cannot eternally persist. Russia herself, like her ancient firs, is evergreen, but Bolshevism is a deciduous tree. Its leaves fall in the winter, leaving visible the eternal green forest.

If one should consider the plight of the Bolshevik dispassionately, as one might judge the game of a chess-player as one looked over his shoulder and saw how the pieces were placed, one would be inclined to say that White would win. The attack of the Black side has spent itself. The Bolshevik has not now a winning position. Clever onlookers can tell him how he can still save his game, but they leave out of account the psychological factor.

Bolshevism could conceivably compromise with capitalism and evolve a business State. The Bolsheviks hate Russia ; they could still further their lust for revenge by handing over Russia, bound hand and foot, to the capitalists of the world. They could parcel up Holy Russia like Imperial Africa and sell it for its oil and gold, and its timber and its platinum. The price to the Bolsheviks would be such a large commission that they and

their heirs could live in grandeur and mock-govern Russia for generations.

It is doubtful in what effective way the White Russia could reply to that. Some say that directly the Bolsheviks thus surrendered the faith of the Third International they would lose their hold upon the reins of government ; any retreat from Marxianism would be fatal—their enemies would spring on them like tigers.

That is an opinion, not necessarily a sound opinion, of what would happen. Trotsky and Krassin and some others are for playing that game ; both have families and have a personal instinct for enriching themselves whatever happens. But there is a psychological conflict. Krassin is a man of no will-power or real ambition. Trotsky has been removed from the game.

Zinovief, Kamenef, and Stalin know that they are agitators and class-war makers, not business men. They prefer the Program. Their weakness lies in their sheer incapacity for peaceful government or for business or national development, in their personal rivalries and jealousies, and in their exaggerated view of their personal rôle in history. They are megalosophists, universalists in thought, but shockingly incapable in small practice.

Lenin on one occasion quoted a well-known Russian proverb—"Two and two may sometimes make five, but they do not make a tallow candle". But the Communist Party's arithmetic is, indeed, largely of this tallow candle variety. Zinovief, *alias* Apfelbaum, is for ever saying—

To-day I brew,
To-morrow I bake,
Next day the Queen's daughter I take.
How lucky it is that nobody knows
My name is Rumpelstilchen.

But everybody does know his real name, and the wretched little German Jew with all his antics is the laughing-stock of the world.

The Moscow Junta are highly absurd in the eyes of modern civilisation, and the only reason why we generally eye them silently and do not laugh at them more often is because of a horror at their blood-guiltiness. Murderers in comic parts are grotesque. Their just reward is death.

I hope they will not be assassinated, but that they will be arraigned in a full court, and that with proper dignity their sentence may be read, and that they may then be executed, not in a spirit of revenge, nor in order that justice may be satisfied, but because they have no place here and they have long since been due somewhere else.

I foresee the downfall of the blood-stained leaders and the crumbling of the Third International. I wait daily news of change. Either internal collapse or change of mind is coming, a second revolution or evolution directed by hands less guilty. Russia stinks to heaven like some horrible battlefield left over from the War. She presents a ghastly anomaly in the midst of our new time of peace. The will of the world and her own inner will now correspond—she must get cleaned up.

God defend us any more from interfering in the internal affairs of Russia, but what we ought to envisage for the future is a democratic federation of States in which the external republics, now independent, function equally with the internal ones, now largely impotent : some sort of United States of Russia including self-ruling Esthonia, Georgia, and the rest, a great sane economic unity with a strong central authority. This would be of untold gain to the Old World.

That would mean, among other things, the return of the educated *émigrés* ; the furnishing of Russia with at least the cadre of an executive capable of administering the country ; the abolition of the Cordon Sanitaire of small republics between Russia and Germany ; resumption of

Russia's rôle as feeder of the industrial West ; resumption of her cultural effort in science, literature, art, music, etc. ; revival of religious life in her educated classes ; peace in Central Asia and in China, and a return of all Europe to the normal.

Something of the Soviet system is likely to remain. The word " soviet " means " council " or " committee ". Government by a freely elected Soviet is not foreign to Russia, nor is the name distasteful. Even the late Imperial Senate of Russia was in reality called the *Gosudarstvenny Soviet* or State Council.

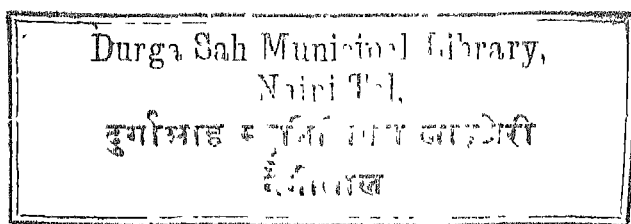
However, in all these prognostications one must moderate one's optimism, bearing in mind certain almost fatal handicaps in Russian character—slowness, passivity, illogicality in thought and action, impracticality, quarrelsomeness. The new words in these years of bitter self-criticism tell of terrible psychological defects—*oblomovstchina*, the state of being like Mr. Oblomov, a character in Russian fiction, who could never make up his mind to any heroic action ; *partiinost*, the state of mind of people who put party before country. The *émigrés* are bitterly and fantastically divided by party ties, when they ought so soundly to have been united by the adversity of the Russia they all love.

We think about Russia as Teutons and Celts think of her, but she is not like us, and has not many of our useful virtues, though she has some decorative ones of her own which we do not possess. In private life many people have found out that "you cannot help a Russian". You seldom foresee what a Russian is going to do. He is not strongly guided by motives of self-preservation as we are. Our main mental retreat and consolation is that he belongs to a people who obviously cannot easily be destroyed.

Some opposition to a restored Russia federated and unified is likely from the succession States. Rumania will not want to give up Bessarabia, nor Poland the Kresi ; the Baltic States will want to hold the sea and tax the users of it for their own profit. Petty nationalism will rear its head against an all-Russian State, but of course Europe will only sustain the obstructions to barbarism as long as Russia remains barbaric. The ridge going from north to south across Central Europe is naturally not good for our health as a whole. Germany is recovering and recapturing the sympathies of the rest of the world, and will naturally take back most of the territory she has lost in the East. She will remain adverse to Poland, and her obvious tendency in the coming years of

288 SOCIALIST SOVIET REPUBLICS

peace and growing power will be to close up the corridor. The new Russia should not be unfriendly to the new Germany. Both have learned at a terrible price the peril of a disturbance of Europe's peace.



INDEX

- Abkhastsi, 230
 Agriculture, 4
 Akhmatova, Anna, 187
 Akkerman, 110, 166
 America, influence of, 116
 Amphiteatrof, M., 10
 Anastasy, Archbishop, 13
 Andreief, Leonid, 10
 Antony, Archbishop, 13
 Armies, the new, 82-3, 101,
 120, 121, 156, 275
 Art Theatre, 12
 Artsibashef, M., 10
 Ataki, 160
 Atheism, Communistic devo-
 tion to, 232

 Balmont, 10
 Balti, 160
 Baltic Conference, 89
 Baltic States, compared, 121-
 122 ; problem of, 123 *seq.*
 Banat, camps in, 14
 Banks in Paris, 219
 Baranof, General, 69
 Baratof, General, 14
 Bark, M., 224
 Bashkirs, 230
 Benjamin, Archbishop, 13
 Benois, 13
 Berdaief, 9
 Bessarabia, 110, 153 *seq.*, 208,
 287
 Black Sea, 169

 Black Sea Fleet, surrender of,
 208
 Blok, 11
 Bootlegging in Finland, 46-7
 Borah, Senator, 202
 Bourgeois Communism, 241
 Bourtsef, 225
 Brest-Litovsk, Treaty of, 23,
 273
 Brusof, 11
 Budachi, 169
 Budenny, General, 84
 Bugaz, 169
 Bulgaria, exiles in, 14
 Bunin, 10, 183, 185 *seq.*
 Burzhui, the, 202

 Capek's *R.U.R.*, 187
 Catherine, statue of, 110
 Catholics, 117
 Censorship in Rumania, 159
 Cetatea Alba, 160, 166, 170
 Cheka, 26 ; likened to Holy
 Inquisition, 231
 Chesham House, 208
 Church, the Orthodox, 32,
 212-13, 214 *seq.*, 277 ; the
 " Living ", 16, 268, 278
 Circular No. 128, 210
 Co-education in Finland, 44
 Communication, means of, 38,
 48, 154, 157
 Communist Party, function
 of, 231 ; understood as a

- vital cell rather than as a growth, 240 ; world-program of, 242 *seq.*
 propaganda in England, 248-249
 rising in Esthonia, 80
 Cost of living in Finland, 48 ;
 in Lithuania, 116 ; in Poland, 135
 Cotton industry, 4
 Currency difficulties, 117, 156
 Cyril, Grand Duke, 41
 Czernowitz, 154-5
 Czortkow, 154
- " Darkest Russia ", 190
 Debt, payment of, 91
 Denikin, General, 14, 25, 149, 238, 274
 Dewar, Mr. G. A. B., and recognition of the Bolsheviks, 250 ; obliged to relinquish his editorship, 251
 Djerzhinski, 232
 Dmitrief, General Radko, 14
 Dniester, 154, 156-8, 160, 275
 Dorpat, university of, 67, 74, 127
 Treaty of, 80, 91
 Dostoieffsky's *Demons* considered, 200
 Dragomirof laager, 163
 Dvinsk, 104
- Education, in Esthonia, 74 ;
 in Finland, 44 ; in Soviet Russia, 277-8
 Elizabeth, Grand Duchess, 7-8
 Empire, plans for destruction of, 261
 Europe, the dividing line of, 21 *seq.*, 81, 106, 269, 285
 Exiles, 9 *seq.*, 24, 71, 73, 100, 148 *seq.*, 180, 209, 214 *seq.*, 219 *seq.*, 273
- Finland, 31 *seq.*, 71, 231
 Finns, history of, 35 *seq.*
 and Swedes, 39
 Frank, S. L., 9
- Gdov, 72, 86
 Georgia, insurrection in, 264
 Germans, 124, 128
 colonists, 162
 growing power of, 287
 policy, 67, 287-8
 Glazunof, 9
 Gogol, his *Tarass Bulba*
 banned, 170 ; Ukrainian folklore of, 196
 Gorky, 11 ; dispute with Merezhkovsky, 200
 G.P.U., 232
 Great Britain and Communism, 182
 Gumilof, 11
 Gutchkof, M., 225
- Henry, O., 183
 Hermits at Valaamo, 41
 Herriot, M., 205 *seq.*, 235
 Hesse, Prince Frederick of, 37
 Hippius, Mme., 198
- Ignatief, Count, 100
 International, Third, 22 ;
 letter to British Communist Party, 252 ; program of, 242-4
 Isborsk, 73
 Ivangorod, ruins of, 71
- Jews, 6, 117, 155, 160, 168
 Judenitch, General, 10, 14, 25, 71, 180
- Kachalof, 12
 Kalinin, M., 231
 Kamenef, 231, 234, 235-6, 283
 Karelia, 52-3, 230, 231
 Karsavina, 12

- Kartashof, Professor, 15, 226
 Kemel Pasha, 14
 Kerensky, 24, 225; and
 Merezhkovsky, 203
 Kipling, 181; quoted, 185
 Kirghiz, 230
 Kishinef, 153, 161 *seq.*
 Kokoftsef, Count, 221
 Kolchak, Admiral, 14
 Komsomoltsi, 213
 Konovalof, 9
 Korenchevsky, Professor, 15
 Kornilof, General, 204
 Kovietski, M., 85
 Kovno, 94, 114 *seq.*, 127
 Krasnof, General, 106
 Krassin, 157, 207, 209, 223,
 235, 237, 275, 283
 Kropotkin, 11, 190
 Kuprin, 10, 179 *seq.*
- Ladoga, Lake, 31
 Land, expropriation in
 Esthonia, 70; in Rumania,
 162; in Russia, 273-4
 Language difficulties, 33, 39,
 96, 114, 126-7
 Latvia, 92 *seq.*; treaty with
 Esthonia, 82
 League of Nations, 38, 82,
 121, 126; passports, 73,
 78, 212
 Lenin, as hope of Communism,
 232; tomb of, 232, 275;
 holy corners in factories,
 233; possible canonisa-
 tion of, 16, 268
 Letts, 93 *seq.*
 Lithuania, 113 *seq.*, 287
 "Living Church", the, 16,
 278; policy of, 268
 Lopokhova, 12
 Losky, Professor, 9
 Lozovsky, 261
 Lunacharsky, 9, 188, 278
 Lvov, Prince, 225
 Lvov, Vladimir, 204, 225
- MacDonald, Mr. Ramsay, 205,
 261-3; his reply to Zino-
 vief letter, 258
 Zinovief on, 237
 Maklakof, M., 214
 Marx, Karl, 232
 Memel, 115
 Mereshkovsky, 10, 198 *seq.*
 Metallnikof, Professor, 15
 Michael, Grand Duke, 7
 Milk in Finland, 44
 Milyukof, Professor, 23, 225
 Mining, 4
 Mogilev, 160
 Moldavia, 230, 231
 Moldavians, the, 155, 160, 169,
 230-31
- Names of places altered, 3, 67,
 86, 102, 103, 109, 161
 Narva, 71, 180
 Naval defences, 69; affected
 by return of Black Sea
 fleet, 208
 N.E.P., 99, 241, 276, 282
 Nepmani, 99, 276
 Nesterof, 13
 Newspapers, 159, 163
 Russian, 39, 67, 159, 163,
 179, 184, 219
 Nicholas II., 7, 16, 35, 40
 Nicholas, Grand Duke, 14, 40
 Nikolaeva, 12
 Novo Selitsa, 155
- Oblomovstchina*, 286
 Odessa, 158, 169, 275
 Old Believers, 72
 Oleg, Grand Duke, 105
 Olympic Games, 46
 Ossetines, 230
- Painlevé, M., 211
 Pantea, M., 162
 Paris, 180 *seq.*
Partiinost, 286
 Passports, issued by League
 of Nations, 73, 78, 212

- Pavlof, Professor, 9
 Pereplotchikof, 13
 Petchora, 73
 Petschenga, 38
 Pilgrims, 32, 276
 Pilniak, Boris, 183, 194
 Pokrowsky, M., 225
 Poland, 128, 129 *seq.*, 287;
 quarrel with Lithuania,
 114-15, 128
 Poles, psychology of, 120
 Poniviezh, 117
 Prague, 9
 Prohibition, 44-6
 Protocol, the Geneva, 121, 128
 Protopopof, 225
 Pruth, 154
 Pskov, 73

 Rachmaninof, 12
 Raids, upon Polish territory,
 119; upon Rumanian
 territory, 165
 Railways, 105, 154; in Soviet
 Russia, 270
 Rakovsky, 157, 168, 207, 235,
 237, 275
 Remizof, 10, 191 *seq.*
 Repin, 8, 13
 Reseni, 160
 Reval, 65 *seq.*, 75 *seq.*
 Revolution, Russian, causes of,
 271-2; of March '17, 23,
 36; of October '17, 37,
 124
 Riga, 92 *seq.*, 127
 Rikof, M., 230, 234
 Roerich, 13
 Rovno, 148
 Rozanof, 10
 Rudeano, General, 161, 175
 Rumania, 153 *seq.*, 287
 Russia, the new, called Sov-
 depia, or Sessera, 3, 229;
 concessions, rights in prop-
 erty, 224; famine in,
 110; feared by Lithuania,
 119; future of, 282 *seq.*;
 may survive Communism,
 286; policy of, 83, 124,
 156; recognition of, 26,
 235; war against, 23, 26;
 relation to Baltic States, 124-
 126; to British Empire,
 242, 257; to China, 255,
 to France, 207; to Poland,
 129 *seq.*; to Rumania, 157
 Russian language, 103, 118,
 126; under Soviet rule,
 194
Russia's Gift to the World, 8
Russkaya Gazeta, 184
Russkaya Mysl, 11
 Russky, General, 14
 Russo-Asiatic Corporation,
 223

 Saba, 169
 Samarin, 225
 Savenkof, 11; his return, 235
 Scriabin, 12
 Seta tribe, the, 74
 Severianin, 10, 71
 Shaliapine, 12
 Shavli, 117
 Sibelius, 33
 Sobinof, 12
 Sologub, 9, 11
 Solovetsky Monastery, 33, 277
 Solovyof, Vladimir, his an-
 ticipation of Bolshevism
 as the "end of history",
 200
 Stalin, M., 231, 234, 238, 283;
 opposite of Trotsky, 238
 Stanislavsky, 12
 Stcheglovitof, 225
 Stepniak, 190
 Stravinsky, 12
 Struve, 11
 Sturmer, 225
 Suffery, Dr., 172-3
 Sunflower seed, 160
 Swedes and Finns, 39

INDEX

293

- Tarass Bulba* forbidden, 170
 Tartu, 74
 Tarutino, 164, 166
 Tatar Bunar, 165
 Tatiana, Grand Duchess, 40
 Tchernicheva, 12
 Tchichikof, 248
 Terestchenko, M., 224
 Theatre of Art, 188
 Tighina, 160
 Tikhon, Patriarch, 268
 Timber business, 71
 Tiraspol, 160
 Tolstoy, Alexey, 187-8
 Tolstoy, Lef, 181
 Tomp, ex-Deputy, 85
 Trade Union Delegation to
 Russia, 260 *seq.*
 Trade Union Movement,
 attempt to capture, 261,
 268
 Trotsky, 8, 9, 183, 231, 283;
 ability denied, 239; and
 the peasants, 270; ex-
 cluded from R.K.P., 239;
 Lenin's opinion of, 235;
 "not a good Com-
 munist", 234; program
 of, 235-7, 241; sent to
 Georgia, 238
 Union des Gauches, 208
 U.S.S.R., the, 229 *seq.*; com-
 pared with U.S.A., 229;
 British treaty with, 236-7
 Ust-Narva, 71
 Valaamo, monastery of, 31 *seq.*
 Viborg, 46
 Vilna, 114, 115
 Vishnegradsky, 221
 Vorovsky, funeral of, 232
 Wells, H. G., 10
 Women in Finland, 43
 Working-class in England and
 America, 243
 Wrangel, General, 14, 25, 149,
 208
 Zaidler, Dr., 15
 Zaleszczyki, 154
 Zemstvo, 225
 Zinovief, 8, 9, 209, 231, 234,
 284; at Fifth Congress
 of Communist Inter-
 national, 260; Lenin's
 opinion of, 235
 letter, the, 207, 210, 236,
 251-9; effect on British
 election of, 263; Mr.
 G. B. Shaw's article on,
 184; Merezhkovsky on,
 203

THE END

BOOKS BY STEPHEN GRAHAM

ON RUSSIA.

- (1) *The Way of Martha and the Way of Mary.* 5th Impression.
- (2) *Undiscovered Russia.* 2nd Impression.
- (3) *With Russian Pilgrims to Jerusalem.* 13th Thousand.
- (4) *Through Russian Central Asia.* Out of print.
- (5) *Changing Russia.* 3rd Impression.
- (6) *Russia and the World.* Out of print.
- (7) *Russia in 1916.* Out of print.

ON AMERICA.

- (1) *With Poor Emigrants to America.*
- (2) *Children of the Slaves (a Study of the Negro Problem).*
- (3) *In Quest of El Dorado.*

ON TRAMPING LIFE.

- (1) *A Tramp's Sketches.* 22nd Thousand.
- (2) *A Vagabond in the Caucasus.* 2nd Impression.
- (3) *Tramping with a Poet in the Rockies.*

ON THE WAR.

- (1) *A Private in the Guards.* 10th Thousand.
- (2) *Europe—Whither Bound?*
- (3) *Life and Last Words of Wilfrid Ewart.*

NOVELS.

- (1) *Priest of the Ideal.* 3rd Impression.
- (2) *Under-London.* 2nd Impression.

TRANSLATIONS from the Russian edited by STEPHEN GRAHAM.

- (1) *The Justification of the Good.* By Vladimir Solovyof.
- (2) *Three Conversations on War and Christianity.* By Vladimir Solovyof.
- (3) *The Sweet Scented Name.* By Sologub.
- (4) *A Slav Soul.* By Kuprin. 2nd Impression.
- (5) *The Way of the Cross.* By Doroshevitch.
- (6) *The Republic of the Southern Cross.* By Brusof.